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ABSTRACT

In the first of four sections of this publication, James H. Stone reviews recent writings on the humanities, citing 299 books, essays, and articles. In the second section, Maxwell H. Goldberg provides definitions of several of the central terms related to technological change and human values (e.g., "science," "technology," "cybernetics," "cybernation," and "human values") and discusses the present and future impact of technological change on society. In the third section, an assortment of opinions collected, by Alan J. Trachtenberg and others, as a sampling of contemporary responses to a changing world are presented. Major topics of opinions are "technology as threat or promise," "the pattern of the working day," "the shape of the community," and "the nature of the good life." Concluding the volume is a bibliography of over 90 pages on technological change, human values, and the humanities. General divisions under which items are grouped are "Background and Context," "Impacts and Implications," and "Further Resources." (This document previously announced as ED 036 525:) "Further Resources." (This document previously announced as ED 036 525.) (LH)

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USING CREATIVE DRAMATICS TO IMPROVE THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS

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PREFACE

The success of a project like the one reported here always depends heavily on the contributions of others, and it is a pleasure to acknowledge their help.

At California State College, Sonoma, Rita Garant and Mary Hoffman of the Research and Grants Office lent invaluable aid and encouragement from first draft to final report. Chairman J.S. Bullen and Anatol Schlosser of the English Department and Betty Halpern of the Education Department generously helped with various practical matters, and the latter also gave us the benefit of her pedagogical experience and expertise. The staff of the St. Helena Unified School District for the most part welcomed us, accomodating our demands on their time and resources and our intrusions on their regular program with admirable tolerance; we are particularly indebted to Superintendent Richard Roche and Elementary School Principal Malcolm McDonald.

The experience gained by our unsalaried CSCS student volunteers hardly repaid their enormous investment of time and effort. As control group leader, Kathy Kirkish played a central and demanding role in the project (and one rendered even more difficult by unforseen developments). Her success provided ample evidence of her singular talent, maturity, and self-assurance. Nominally a video technician, Barrie Wadman was in fact an integral part of the project's instructional team. In addition to keeping the videotape equipment working effectively and reliably under difficult circumstances, he proved an able and resourceful assistant to Mrs. Gallegos in countless ways. As professional partners in every respect except slaary, Kathy and Barrie were indispensible, and neither our admiration for their ability nor our gratitude for their dedication to the success of the project can be adequately expressed.

Finally, there were the students themselves, who gave us not only their cooperation but their trust, forgave us when we stumbled over their culture and our video cables, and in the long run taught us much more than we taught them; for their warmth, honesty, and humor we are deeply grateful.

R.H. Hendrickson

Frances Gallegos

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I. INTRODUCTION

English instruction for Mexican-American students is a major educational problem in many parts of California and the southwest, where such students are often a sizeable part of the school population. Like children from other minority cultures, Mexican-American students typically are much less successful in school than their Anglo counterparts, score lower on standardized tests, fall further behind the longer they are in school, and drop out earlier and in larger numbers (Brussell 1968, Rodriguez 1969). And language barriers have been generally regarded as a major reason for this disparity (Brussell 1968, Bernal 1969). Some Mexican-American students come to school knowing little or no English. Others are more or less fluent speakers of both Spanish and English but only in dialects that differ widely from those used in the schools. Some know relatively little Spanish and are, for practical purposes, exclusively English speakers. Yet even among the latter group there are many whose language varies significantly from the English of the schools and the majority culture in general.

Educators, recognizing an obligation to help students who have such language handicaps, have established many special programs for this purpose, culminating in recent experiments with fully bilingual and bicultural schools (Anderson and Boyer, 1970; Gaarder 1970; John and Horner 1970). But bilingual education, while it offers a comprehensive solution to the problem, is beyond the resources of many schools. And though the impact of other approaches is difficult to evaluate, they have thus far yielded no dramatic breakthroughs, nor even a consistent pattern of steady progress. One reason for these disappointing results is undoubtedly the tendency of many educators to misunderstand and over simplify the language learning needs of minority students. The difficulties Mexican-American students have with school English are often attributed entirely to the interference of the Spanish, with instruction in English as a second language proposed as a blanket solution. When the influence of non-standard Mexican-American dialects of English is recognized at all, they are usually regarded as corruptions of the language which should be supplanted by standard English. Only rarely is it suggested that the forms of standard English be taught as alternatives to, rather than replacements for, the student's native English. And recent work in sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics has shown that all of these views--including the last one--represent seriously inadequate assumptions about language learning and language difference.

In fact, nothing less than the development of an ability to use spoken English in a wide variety of modes and styles will adequately prepare Mexican-American students linguistically to cope with the majority culture and at the same time preserve their own cultural heritage and identity (Spolsky, 1971 :2). Both theory and practical experience suggest that one of the most promising techniques for developing English language skills on this broad

scale is the classroom use of improvisational dramatics. To explore the potential of this approach, USOE support was sought for a small experimental program during the Spring, 1972 school term using classroom dramatics with elementary and junior high school students as a way of promoting greater competence and performance in English. This program supplemented rather than supplanted the normal language teaching program, but constituted a major part of the oral language instruction received by the students who took part. Portable ½" videotape equipment was used both as an instructional tool and to keep a running record of the students' linguistic and paralinguistic behavior and the relative success of the various activities used. At the end of the school year, the participating students' improvement in English skills was evaluated to determine whether it was significantly greater than that of students in a non-participating control group.

The primary objectives of this experiment were two-fold. The first was to gain intensive experience with classroom dramatics as a central instructional strategy in the language arts. Though this approach has been advocated with increasing frequency in recent years (e.g., Allen 1969; Hoetker 1969; Moffett 1967, 1968a, 1968b) improvisational drama has seldom been used in the classroom except as an occasional or peripheral activity, and its value as a language teaching tool has not been clearly understood. Sustained and systematic applications are needed to refine the techniques, identify the limitations, and evaluate the overall effectiveness of classroom dramatics as a major component of the langueage arts curriculum. The second aim was to explore the potential of improvisational drama in overcoming the special language learning problems of Mexican-American students. In theory, such an approach should be especially effective, for reasons examined at some length in Appendix I. But there has been scarcely any classroom experience to validate or qualify this hypothesis. The program outlined in this report was a first step toward translating promise into practice.

Given the limited scope and brief duration of this project, the results can hardly be regarded as conclusive. On the whole, however, the experience of the project staff clearly verified the effectiveness of creative dramatics in promoting more effective use of English by Mexican-American students and confirmed the desirability of employing this approach on a much broader scale. At the same time, the experiment brought problems and difficulties into focus--among them some which the project staff had not anticipated--that should be taken into account in planning future programs of this kind. The project's activities, problems, and findings are described in detail in the following pages.

PROCEDURES

I. Schedule of Activities. Because this project was not funded until several weeks after its proposed starting date, classroom activities had to be completed in a shorter period than was originally planned. As a result, final arrangements with the participating schools were made in some haste, and some details of the program had to be modified. These changes are not regarded as having adversely affected the outcome, however.

Between April 3 and June 9 the students involved in the project met with the project staff three times a week in sessions of about one hour each. (The time devoted to classroom activities was thus approximately the same as that called for in the original schedule of twice-weekly meetings beginning in February) Evaluation tapes were made at the beginning of these meetings in April and again at the end, in early June.

For reasons discussed under (7) below, the project staff was not entirely satisfied with the results from the junior high group. Consequently, an effort was made to gain additional experience with junior high age students in a different setting through participation in a summer migrant education program in Healdsburg, Calif., and evaluation of the project was delayed pending the outcome. As it turned out, the Healdsburg program did not lend itself to sustained use of creative dramatics, so the results of this effort are not included here as a part of the project. Mrs. Gallegos' experience in Healdsburg did, however, provide additional insight into the problems and priorities of English instruction for Mexican-American students, and is therefore mentioned later in this report.

Final assessment of the project, based on a review of the students' performance on the evaluation tapes, was carried out in late August and early September.

2. Selection of Students. Two groups of students were used in the project. The first consisted of approximately 32 6th and 7th grade students at Stevenson Junior High School in St. Helena, Calif. All were of Mexican-American background and were identified by the school staff as being more or less deficient in English language skills. Most of them spoke both English and Spanish fairly fluently, but one student had considerable trouble with English while several others spoke Spanish only with some difficulty. These students were released from their regular English classes to take part in the project and met with the project staff during the class period just before lunch.

The second group consisted of about 26 second grade students at St. Helena Elementary School. Most (though not all) of these students were also of Mexican-American background and were felt by their teachers to be performing below grade level in English skills. To avoid unduly disrupting the participation of these students in the regular school program, they met with the project staff from 2 to 3 p.m., immediately following the end of the regular school day, taking a late bus home.

Assignment of students in both groups to either experimental or control groups was made by the project staff largely on an arbitrary basis. However, students who expressed a strong preference were given a choice where possible, on the theory that a positive approach to the project activities by the students was more important than careful matching of the groups by age, sex, and the like, especially since the number of students involved was so small as to render distribution within groups largely insignificant.

3. Physical Environment. At the junior high school, a large home economics classroom was provided for the experimental group, while the control group met in a vacant typing room. At the elementary school, a room normally assigned to special education classes was used for the experimental group, with the control group occupying one half of the school cafeteria.

Though these facilities were the best available, none was well suited to the project activities. The elementary school cafeteria was perhaps the least congenial setting, being much too large and factory-like. Moreover, the project group had to contend with the noise of the clean-up activities in the other half of the room, a problem accentuated by the lack of sound conditioning. By comparison, the carpeted and draped classroom used by the experimental group was much more comfortable, and the furniture was more easily rearranged. Even here, however, the toys and equipment used during the regular school day proved to be a distraction, and air conditioner noise interfered with the video sound track.

At the junior high school, the oppressively institutional character of both the rooms and their furniture tended to inhibit the openness and informality essential for the project activities, and again equipment used by other classes tended to be distracting. Furthermore, the arrangement of the home economics room combined with its lack of sound conditioning to produce chronic problems with echoes and background noise, so that sound reproduction was marginal at best.

Such shortcomings are, of course, characteristic of most school facilities, and the project staff generally succeeded in overcoming them. It may be worth pointing out, however, that our experience continually demonstrated the unsuitability of conventional calssrooms for creative dramatics or, indeed, for any other kind of student-centered, process-oriented activity. We came away from the project more firmly convinced than ever of the need for more flexible, less hostile classroom environments and for more creative uses of the physical settings available in schools. Since conventional, self-contained classrooms and unimaginative ways of using them remain the rule in American education, however, the practical value of any new instructional approach depends on its ability to survive in such settings, and we found that the limitations of the rooms used for the project were not an insurmountable handicap.

4. Staff Roles. Given the extremely short time available for classroom activities in the project, it was recognized at the outset that the students' classroom inhibitions would have to be overcome as rapidly as possible. Therefore, the staff sought to establish from the beginning as open and informal a relationship with the students as the circumstances permitted. This was accomplished in part through relatively casual dress, the use of first names, and a generally relaxed attitude toward conventional classroom decorum. Such an approach seems essential for the success of creative dramatics; previous school experience generally conditions students to avoid spontaneity, freedom of expression, and vigorous physical activity, precisely the kinds of behavior that dramatic improvisation demands, and this conditioning can only be overcome by establishing a decidedly different ambiance.

The staff regarded authoritarian modes of regulating student behavior as a last resort (and in fact they hardly ever proved necessary). It was made clear to the students that we were not interested in enforcing petty regulations but that serious infractions of school rules would jeopardize

the program, and that project activities could be carried out only with the students' willing cooperation. Once some initial misunderstandings were ironed out, this approach proved highly successful, and discipline largely ceased to be a problem. As noted in (7) below, some friction arose in the junior high school over the degree of freedom granted to students by the project staff, but this seems to have been largely unavoidable, given the project's nature and aims.

The staff members responsible for both the experimental and control groups sought to develop a sense of community by acting less as teachers in the traditional sense than as activity leaders, and this effort was especially successful with the junior high school students. Our video technician contributed to this effort by entering into the project activities as circumstances permitted and by encouraging students to assist him in setting up and operating the equipment. In general, every effort was made to establish relationships with the students which encouraged them to be self-motivated, self-disciplined, and unselfconscious.

The project director's role turned out to be somewhat different than had been anticipated. Due to the difficulty of getting a suitable adult interviewer on short notice to make the first set of evaluation tapes, it was necessary to avoid further delay in initiating the project by using the director for this purpose. Thereafter, to avoid establishing a relationship between the director and the students which might have unduly influenced the second set of evaluation tapes, he had to adopt the role of "outsider," visiting the project groups only infrequently and not joining directly in their activities. In practice, this arrangement proved satisfactory, especially since time conflicts resulting from the shift in schedule to three meetings a week made it difficult for the director to be present on a regular basis anyway. Frequent consultation with the staff and extensive use of the videotapes kept the director closely in touch with day-to-day activities and progress. And in retrospect, his relative detachment was an advantage in diagnosing and dealing with some of the problems the staff encountered.

5. Use of Videotape Equipment. Because the project was of short duration, leasing of the necessary videotape equipment was more economical than outright purchase. Large leasing firms showed little interest in supplying equipment on a short-term basis, but a satisfactory contract was negotiated with a small local firm and the success of this relationship provided evidence of the advantages in dealing with local businesses. The equipment provided was new, and was maintained in excellent order throughout the duration of the project; technical difficulties were few and minor.

6. Classroom Activities: Junior High Group. The first few meetings of the group were devoted to getting organized and making the evaluation tapes. These were videotaped conversations in which the project director interviewed groups of three or four students seated around a small table. To provide a more or less uniform semantic context for the interviews and to minimize cultural interference, the students were asked to fantasize about the sort of house they might like to live in with several of their friends, if they could have any sort of house they wanted. In these interviews, students from both experimental and control groups were mixed randomly.

Once the evaluation tapes were finished, classroom activities began immediately. Since these were the heart of the project, it semms desirable to record them in detail and to convey, as much as possible, a sense of the prevailing atmosphere and the dynamics of the groups, as well as a descrip-

tion of the activities themselves. Accordingly, the following account is transcribed with a minimum of editing from Mrs. Gallegos' weekly logs.

April 3-7

We started with tug-of-war games to get the students into creating imaginary objects and working in response to each other's physical movements. We played back the videotapes of this activity to acquaint them with their video images. Next we introduced the object-in-hand game: a person holds or uses an imaginary object (i.e. a ball, a cup, a pencil) and continues logical action with it until somebody correctly guesses the object. Then the object is passed onto the next individual, who must correctly hold it and transform it into another object. This exercise is designed to train the tactile senses to "feel" imaginary objects and to train the observers to develop their innate logic about the use of objects. Most of the kids were tense about being observed by others and tended to crouch and lean over or not quite fulfill the lines of action. José, who was to show great delight and skill in later acting exercises, had excellent, clearly delineated hand movements and controlled his facial expression to correlate with the movement. Other kids tended to grin nervously and look not at their object but at the observers.

We played some trust exercises to overcome this self-consiousness. In these, a "blind" student was lead with eyes closed around the room while another student guided him or her around obstacles. Gaylen, who had difficulty in relinquishing her tough, independent self-image throughout the semester, refused to trust her guide, Frank (one of the gentlest boys in the class, and one whom she has known since grade school). Joey had enough confidence in his guide to blow bubble gum while being led around. He is one of the most assimilated kids in the group--that is, he is hardly conscious of being a Chicano, doesn't speak Spanish, and is generally regarded as an Anglo by the other kids.

Then we went into work pantomimes. Gaylen did one that I did not recognize, but the kids guessed it immediately--cutting grapes. She was the only one to pick this specific pantomime, although others did hoeing pantomemes. In later discussions, Gaylen showed a consciousness of Chicano politics, would refer to La Raza, called Anglos "Gabachos," and seemed to have a very realistic view of the status of Chicanos in St. Helena. Generally, we have found that older Chicano kids tend to share Gaylen's ethnic view and that her precosity might have been due to having older brothers (whom the school identified as troublemakers) and to her own problems with school authorities (who were trying to make her conform to their mythic image of a good little Anglo girl.)

I tried to determine English competence by having students do mystery pantomimes based on a written list of uncomplete sentences. They had to read it, choose one sentence to build and improve on, choose the group with whom they wanted to act, develop the parts and the plot. The sentences were:

A man came through my window...
I found a lady tied up on the floor...
We were walking down a hallway when...

The teacher got a strange look on his face...

These basically simple sentences were deliberately left incomplete so that they could be developed dramatically. It should be pointed out that even though these were silent pantomimes, the students had to plan them out verbally.

One of the more interesting improvisations, a housebreaking scene, grew out of the first sentence. Gaylen played the window and her pantomime was elaborate and suspenseful. At the end of the scene, which had a beginning, middle, and end--the literary dream of every English teacher-- she righteously dropped on the burglar, foiling his devious crime. Though Gaylen was regarded by the school as uncooperative, she participated willingly in the project from the beginning and provided valuable leadership.

Another improvisation with José, Jorge, and Chris was interesting because they planned it totally in Spanish. The first three boys tended to act together a lot, spoke Spanish to each other most of the time, and sometimes to me. Jorge had been in the U.S. two years and was shy about speaking English, although he understood most of the instructions given in English. Often Ignacio, who spoke both languages fluently, would transmit Jorge's questions and responses to me in English (I had trouble hearing Jorge because he was soft spoken). José was bilingual, although his English was not as fluent as a Chicano's. He had been in the U.S. only a few years. These three boys had strong Spanish accents, which the other Chicano students lacked in normal conversation.

In an attempt to better gauge their written competence, I next asked the students to create their own mystery sentences and write them down. A combination of circumstances inhibited the development of any really successful improvisations: my own problem in explaining the task, compounded by a reluctance to overexplain, and their difficulties in starting a story from scratch. I had suggested as a plausible improvisation Cortes meeting with Montezuma. Except for the three boys from Mexico, José, Jorge, and Ignacio, the kids did not know about Cortes. So I gave a brief history of the Conquest, threw in a sympathetic plea for La Malinche, and asked them to form a group of Indios and a group of Hispanos. The Indios misunderstood what I had said about the Spanish bringing horses to this continent and appropriated the horse as an integral part of their activities: the two boys played horses, while the royal court rocked in trotting unison in their improvised carriage. At this point, Cortes arrived with a rag-tag band of soldiers, not one of whom could muster military bearing nor follow an order. Ignacio played Cortes and did not seem to know how to deal with los indios. José as a Hispano got very excited and told Cortes to kill them "porque son los indios." When his advice was ignored, he tried to steal one of the horses. The improvisation ceased without any promise of conquest--indeed it looked like the Indians had won.

April 10-14

This week was devoted to developing the ability to work together and to making the fictions of space more concrete. We started with the mirror exer-

cise, one individual reflecting another in movement. It went very well. So I decided to try building on it verbally with the tension exercise. One person says one sentence to another and the other responds with a different sentence. This is repeated until the scene explodes with tension and ambiguity, as in a Pinter play---e.g. "My name is Joe." That's nice," etc. Some of the kids whom I had spotted as unlikely to use elaborate language constructions surprised me by building the tension on a variety of adjectives--i.e. "Did you go to the brown, run-down house last night?" (Unfortunately, this was not video-recorded because the tape was being changed.)

Now came time to try to verbalize the where, the space. The students were asked to create verbal improvisations out of locations: a bar, a bakery, a meat shop, a restaurant (they had some difficulty in reading this word), a kitchen, a garden, a winery, a bedroom, etc. Their desire to use props was strongly manifested in this exercise, even though they had used some chairs before. Tables, chairs, cups, paper, wastepaper baskets, brooms--anything not glued down was used for props. It was apparent that the kids were getting very involved in their creations. The "where" improvisations consisted mostly of western movie saloon scenes: Three of the girls played cowboy hipsters, circa I952--"Give me a drink, daddy." Their movements were the bouncing, jiving rock of the old bop muscian. In another improvisation, one boy ordered "milk on the rocks" and the bartender added "income tax" to the bill.

It was suggested by some of the school staff that the kids selected barroom scenes because of the high frequency of bar attendance by their families and acquaintances. However, these improvisations had an amazing similarity to TV scenes (in terms of terseness, dialogue, blocking, etc.) And since television is saturated with dramatic representations of violence occurring in saloons, the reiteration of these dramas by Chicano children in fact appears to represent cultural assimilation rather than cultural difference.

April I7-2I

This week we continued the development of working together in pantomime. We used the sense of weight to create improvisations of students filling objects and passing the heavy items to others. This exercise creates flowing lines between the actors and teaches the need to observe others. The students were asked to improvise the filling of various items; a pot, a casket, a pail, cups, a stretcher. It should be noted that the students were free to suggest items and to select the ones they would do. This was true for all the improvisations during the project.

One of the improvisations was actually a dramatized pun. Several students interpreted "pot" as the synonym for marijuana and created a quiet picnic where they used "pot." It was interrupted by the police, who were portrayed as brutal and covetous of the marijuana, and there was a mock fight in which the professional technique of hitting one's open hand created the

punch sound. It is noteworthy, however, that the students were careful never to actually hurt one another.

Two of the predominantly Spanish-speaking boys, Ignacio and Jorge, did a filling-the-water-pail pantomime. I asked in English what they were filling and Jorge answered me in Spanish. His understanding of English was quite extensive as he always followed my instructions and questions, but he was shy about using English.

Feeling that it was time to develop more verbal kinds of improvisations, I discussed with the students the various ways of using language in social situations and pointed out some of the differences between their own use of English and that of the majority community. At one point in this discussion, Gaylen dropped her pencil and said "Get that for me, somebody," with light stress on "that," heavy stress and rising pitch on "me," and falling pitch on "somebody." I seized on this as an example, repeating Gaylen's phrase and then changing it into "Somebody get that for me?" with rising pitch on "me." When I asked the students if there was a difference, most of them said that the latter way of saying it (i.e., the Anglo way) was "nicer." There were other indications that the students generally accepted the negative judgments of the Anglo community on their way of using English. We were thus in a position to begin focusing more clearly on the hostility of the majority community, the mixed feelings of inferiority and defiance it aroused in the kids, and the importance of language behavior as a sign of cultural difference and a source of social conflict.

April 24-28

This week was devoted to creating relationships between contrasting types of individuals, dramatising the conflicts that arise out of sub-conscious "readings" of body language, and forms of verbal approach. Though it was far too early in the project to work on the more sophisticated and complex elements of drama, the conflicts and confrontations that some of the students were having with some of the school staff were seriously interfering with the progress of the project. Therefore, I decided to work within the "reality" framework and try to develop a consciousness of the dynamics of conflict.

Since the students reported that they were frequently provoked by hostile teachers and that they reacted with reciprocal hostility, we launched an examination of the nature of the hostility. Several students were asked to reproduce the incidents that enraged them, playing the roles of the provoking teachers while more neutral students played the besieged students. Video was used for analysis very successfully. Invariably, the students portrayed the initial approach of the teacher with an aggressive body movement--feet placed a good distance apart with the torso resting heavily on the hips, either with hands placed on the hips, or hand outstretched in a pointing, accusing manner, and most often with the shoulders thrust forward and inward like a boxer. The student under "attack" would show retreating defensiveness in his posture, either leaning back and down in the chair, or, if standing, placing one foot somewhat behind the other and balancing his weight on the rear leg. The students claimed that invariably they wanted

to thrust forward, perhaps even to strike out at the teacher. The imitation teacher would inevitably start the verbal encounter with a terse, harshly voiced question: "Where is your homework?" "Why aren't you in class?" The students were reacting to a change in intonation pattern as well as to the peculiar nature of the question as an authoritarian symbol of aggression (cf. Kafka's The Trial.)

The literal accuracy of these dramatizations is debatable. At times they were probably influenced by the common tendency of junior high age students to exaggerate their experiences and to resent adult authority. They also reflected a good deal of the kind of misunderstanding that stems from cultural differences in linguistic and paralinguistic codes. For example, the fourth (or highest) phonemic level of pitch is usually reserved for genuine emergencies by Mexican-Americans, while many middle-class Anglo speakers tend to use it merely for rhetorical emphasis. The result is that verbal exchanges regarded as trivial by Anglo teachers are perceived by Mexican-American students as major crises, and modes of speaking intended only as mild assertions of the teachers' authority strike the student as radically hostile and threatening. On the other hand, the students' way of talking and moving often violate Anglo teachers' expectations. Some of the girls in the project group, for instance, had adopted a long-striding, jouncing gait with shoulders hunched forward and inward that Anglos tend to associate with young hoodlums of the "West Side Story" variety, and their body positions and gestures when talking with adults were often of the sort that are interpreted in the majority culture as expressions of disrespect or defiance. Not surprisingly, these girls were considered "troublemakers" and were often singled out for infractions of school rules.

Such mutual misinterpretations were far from accounting entirely for the students' anger and frustration, or for the contempt and anger openly expressed towards them by some members of the school staff. However, to the extent that the tension between Chicano students and school staff was a product of sociolinguistic misunderstanding, we were able to make the students more aware of what in their behavior expecially "bugged" their teachers and to suggest some less provocative alternatives. The use of videotape to play back their re-enactments of conflict situations proved especially valuable at this point, since the students were able to observe themselves acting out the behavior patterns that were being misinterpreted.

Building on this increased self-awareness, we then asked the students to apply their observations of body language and verbal forms to improvisations built around the theme of education. Once again they were asked to locate the improvisation: in the school, in a forest, on a ranch, etc. The most astounding improvisation was located at a gas station. José drove up, politely asked for gas, windshield wiping and directions to someplace. The attendent, Frank, was pleasant and polite. This, according to their prologue, was "education." Next, they did the same scene, but "without education." José drove up, and code-switched into a slangy, profane, insulting man demanding gas and directions. The attendent produced a corresponding character who was reluctant, insulting and lazy. Even the directions to the someplace were vague and unhelpful. This improvisation struck the whole class as proving our point about conflict--"What you sees is what you gets."

Other improvisations were elicited to show relationships developing out of styles--strangers waiting for an ambulance, meeting the president, an accident on the school bus, the first day in the teachers' room. We had reached a point in the students' dramatic development where they had a strong sense of what would work dramatically. If one situation, such as meeting the president (it floundered because of a too-quickly contrived assasination), didn't work, then the students immediately worked on another. They were always experimenting, always transforming the raw sources of their imaginations into dramatic possibilities. Improvisations eliciting persuasion techniques were tried. We asked the students to limit their groups to two, with one selling the other an item he definitely did not want. They were to locate and to specify the item. The improvisations were about a hat, a taco, a vacuum cleaner, books, marijuana, and cheese. On the whole, the sales strategies were founded on the venerable premise that if the customer doesn't want the merchandise, he must be crazy.

May I-5

This week we worked on establishing themes in the improvisations, but the theme I selected, time, was almost too abstract. The students were asked to dramatize the various aspects and implications of time. In spite of confusions about the assignment, they produced several explorations of the theme. They developed a life and death improvisation around surgery, a "minutes left to live under the skillful hands of an operating team." Plastic scalpels were carefully passed, dishcloths clotted with red paint daubed at the flowing blood, sutures were inserted with pencils, and the entire successful precedure dusted off with a sifter. Another improvisation dealt with crime and retribution. Two criminals are apprehended by brutal policemen. They are brought before a judge in a dunce's cap and given severe sentences. Their lawyers protest, are arrested, and all are given death sentences. Yet another improvisation developed out of a vampire seeking his victims at the strike of midnight. His victims included Ironsides, played by a boy, Joel, who specialized in this TV character and in English butlers. A doctor is called to examine the strange deaths, observes the fang bites on the victims' throats, and says "I think they're dog bites." After the improvisation. the cast discussed alternatives to the plot.

May 8-I2

This week we played with makeup. I brought the rudiments: white face, rouge, eyeliner, shadow, lipstick, a few wigs, some mirrors. The idea behind all this goop was to facilitate the adoption of personae. It had been difficult for some of the students to relinquish their identities (a precarious arrangement at their ages) and participate freely as other characters in the improvisations. The makeup would give them a tangible mask. After the students experimented with applying makeup, it looked like a Dia del Muerte celebration. There were apes, clowns, old men and monkeys, Cantinflas, lovely ladies, professors and priests. Characters interacted with each other, spontaneously creating little vignettes appropriate to the masks.

The three students, all girls, who had the most problems relinquishing their self-images tended to restrict themselves to conventional feminine makeup.

These three, Gaylen, Marilyn and Alice, were regarded by the school staff as "tough" and as troublemakers and, though they felt this reputation was unwarranted and unfair, they tended to live up to it by adopting a tough, masculine style which was reflected in their speech and (as noted above) in their ways of standing and walking. Significantly, however, they used the makeup moderately to create a lovely feminine look of the sort promoted by "Seventeen" magazine and other media of the Anglo majority. Clearly, these girls were already role-playing in school, acting out the parts in which they had been cast by their teachers. As, in many ways, the most mature students in the project group, they were most aware of their rejection by the majority culture and, denied self-respect in their own terms had chosen to gain recognition by living up to the school's expectations in spades. Yet the fantasy images of themselves which the use of makeup permitted them to realize were far removed from their harsh, aggressive, defiant public selves.

May I5-I9

This week we played with more encounter improvisations built around the theme of travel and meeting strangers. The students found it easy to locate the encounters in bars, because of the simplicity of action (drinking) and the plausibility of eccentric behavior. One group created a bilingual improvisation, that is, they did a two part scene first in Spanish and then in English. The plot concerned two men who meet another in a bar. They are rude and aggressive and drink too much. A fight ensues and the bartender throws them out. They stumble home, try to enter the wrong house, and are thrown out by the tenants of the house who happen to be the bartender and the acquaintance. Dan, who played the bartender, does not speak fluent Spanish. He was limited in the first run-through to one word commands and short sentences (e.g. "¿Cual tienes?"--Note the second person form.) He became more abrasive and loquacious in the English segment. Danny, the acquaintance, speaks no Spanish and was reduced to mere grunts. Both boys understood the Spanish spoken by the drunks or borrachos, Ricky and Ignacio. The latter boy is more fluent in Spanish than English and took a more dominant role in the Spanish segment. Ricky used an almost exaggerated Spanish accent and did not speak complex Spanish sentences. Indeed, his language was limited to certain profanities and slang. He referred to Danny as "Ese" or Buddy, a term the students do not use among themselves. I suspect that Ricky knows only a limited stereotyped Spanish, one that is common among tough, young boys. There was also a space trip to Venus which included a hungry crew, a radio operator on Earth, and vicious Venusians. After many attacks, the crew managed to escape the deadly rays of the aggressors and arrive safely back on Earth.

This week was punctuated by the suspension of Gaylen. She had evidently fought with an Anglo girl, and since Gaylen did not find her previous suspensions objectionable, the school decided to suspend her in the Counselor's office for three days. Her twin sister, Marilyn, was extremely upset and morose as can be seen in this exchange:
Marilyn: I want to die.
Teacher: Why?
Marilyn: I don't know. I hate this world.
It was common for the students to react with frustration and anger and self-

destructiveness to punishment of one of their friends. They believed that they were singled out for punishment because of their ethnic identity and that Anglos seldom received equal treatment. For instance, all the Chicano boys told us that they were forced by the administration to cut their hair very short, yet some Anglo boys at the school wore hair below the napes of their necks. These complaints gained credence from the open expressions of bias against the Chicano students and their culture by some members of the school staff (see (7) below). But whether they were fully justified or not, the important point is the extent to which the students genuinely felt themselves to be victimized by the social dynamic of the school. Gaylen's brawl with the Anglo student, for example, seems almost inevitable given the conflicts between cultures and the school's self-assumed role as enforcer for the values of the Anglo majority. Since Anglo students often gain acceptance from teachers which is denied to Chicanos, they appear to be in league with the enemy. Moreover, Anglo students typically initiate or escalate conflicts verbally but draw back from overt violence, whereas the Chicano's directness and greater freedom in venting emotions commonly lead to physical expressions of anger. Hence it is usually the Chicano who strikes the first blow, and is therefore punished by the school authorities as the aggressor. The conclusion that Anglos are cowardly and devious and that Chicanos are largely helpless because the system is loaded against them follows inevitably.

In any event, Gaylen was in the Counselor's office and her loss was sorely felt in the project group. Contrary to predictions at the beginning of the project that she would be a troublemaker, she had adopted a leadership role and was, I felt, experimenting with a less tough and cynical image of herself. For the sake of both Gaylen and the group, therefore, I urged the Principal to let Gaylen return to her classes. He refused to rescind her suspension but conceded that she could continue to take part in the project activities. At the next class meeting, Gaylen appeared but was surly and withdrawn. She wouldn't talk to me or participate in the improvisations, and her sister Marilyn also avoided me and manifested anger. In time, I learned that the Principal had told Gaylen she could continue coming to the project group meetings but that her suspension would be extended for an additional two days, thus in effect punishing her for taking part in the project. Such was the "cooperation" we learned to expect from the school administration.

May 22-26

We tried this week to develop more encounter improvisations: in the park, at a party, in school, at a job interview, etc. Unfortunately, the project was subject to the end-of-the-year syndrome, the students were restless, and the improvisations lacked the ingenuity and development of previous weeks. In fact, the remaining few days at the school were generally chaotic and unproductive from an instructional point of view, though warm and unifying (and sad) from a personal one. We had a parting fiesta at the park and much conversation about what we would all do as individuals during the summer, a fitting end to a sympathetic union.

One of the chief factors in everybody's inability to concentrate was Alice's problem. I quote from my journal of May 24:

> Today Alice and Marilyn asked me to talk to their probation officer. It seems that the school principal wrote a letter to him recommending that Alice be placed in a detention center or foster home--presumably due to her school (or rather anti-school) behavior....Later, at the elementary school, we fortuitously ran into the school district psychologist. She said that Alice had been in classes for emotionally handicapped kids in the elementary school, and she felt that her low test scores were due to a language problem. The psychologist also reported that Alice's family seems hostile to outsiders (she herself had once been run off their property with a shotgun), and that Alice's troubles in elementary school--she had taken a school record player--occurred when she was very disturbed. Alice had told me that her mother was in the hospital at the time, with the family in charge of an older sister whom Alice didn't like. From the psychologist I also learned that Alice had made a point of continuing to use her father's name after her mother remarried.
>
> The psychologist said that she felt "handcuffed" by lack of cooperation from the junior high school staff and had for that reason been unable to help Alice. Some teachers there deliberately sought confrontations with students like Alice, she thought, and even those who didn't were trapped by a disciplinary system in which the only actions they could recommend were punitive: suspension, probation, and detention.

I asked Marilyn, Gaylen, and Alice to work out something which would show Alice's verbal capabilities. They decided on an interview technique with Alice and Gaylen discussing their problems in school. We were able to videotape both their "dry runs" as they worked out the interview and then the finished product; Alice told me that if the results were unsatisfactory when I looked at the tape, she would do it over. On replaying the tape, I found that Alice was somewhat less fluent than Gaylen or Marilyn, and more limited in register. She seemed less able to shift out of a slangy vocabulary and irreverent manner of speaking more commonly associated with urban males. This fact may have reflected a different range of social experience and in particular the influence of older brothers, and it probably had something to do also with the insecurity manifested in Alice's emotional problems; experimentation with alternative social and linguistic roles can be very threatening to those whose understanding and acceptance of themselves is shaky to begin with. In addition, both Alice and Gaylen tended to use relatively simple sentences a lot, though this seemed to be more a matter of style than competence. I got the impression that they regarded verbal complexity as a luxury with little place in their rough-and-tumble world, and that their direct, unelaborated syntax mirrored an uncomplicated, no-nonsense mode of interpreting experience.

Despite these limitations, however, it seemed obvious that Alice had no trouble communicating clearly with anyone who was seriously interested in understanding her. Her television performance was thus a fitting conclusion for the classroom activities of the experimental group, illustrating the general tendency of educators to under-rate Chicano students' English competence which we had expected to find, but which was more acute in the

junior high than we anticipated.

While the activities described above were being carried out by the experimental group, the junior high control group was engaged in a series of discussions and exercises intended to clarify and improve the students' self-concepts and increase the effectiveness of their written communication. The basic aim was to give the students involved the same kind of special attention the experimental group was receiving, in a similarly free and non-authoritarian environment, so as to minimize the "Hawthorne effect" when their performances on the evaluation tapes were compared with those of students in the experimental group.

It was found at the outset that most of the students in the control group knew very little about their native culture except that Anglos generally held it in low esteem. So the group leader began bringing in a wide variety of materials intended to make them more aware of, and more familiar with, their cultural inheritance. These materials included descriptive books and periodicals, imaginative literature by Latino and Chicano authors, art prints, and film strips. They were used both as background materials and as stimuli for talking and writing about Chicano experience.

Initially, the response was not very enthusiastic. Since the group's activities were a less radical departure from ordinary classroom work than those of the experimental group, many of the students seemed to regard them as just another "school trip," and some engaged in the kind of disruptive behavior that often characterizes "troublemakers" in conventional classrooms (the school staff had warned us, rather grimly, to expect this). The situation was aggravated by unsettling intrusions by the regular school staff (see (7) below). In time, however, the group leader's refusal to lose her composure began to take effect. As the students realized that she was genuinely interested in establishing a productive and mutually trusting situation, their participation in group activities steadily improved. A turning point was reached when two of the least cooperative students persisted in disrupting one of the group's meetings by talking loudly to each other about personal matters. The group leader, refusing to be provoked into assuming an authoritarian role, merely asked them to carry on their conversation in another part of the room if they did not wish to participate. They did so, but in a short time became so interested in what was going on in the group that they quietly (and rather sheepishly) rejoined it. After that, though there were momentary lapses, disruptive behavior ceased to be much of a problem in the control group.

As the students learned about the art, folklore, and history of their culture, and about recent attempts to preserve them and reaffirm their value, they became interested in getting more, and more current, information than was contained in the available source materials, and this led to a letter-writing project. The group leader pointed out that there were numerous organizations devoted to promoting Chicano cultural awareness who might be able to help, and brought in a directory of their addresses. The students discussed what kind of information they wanted and which organizations were the most likely sources for it. They also spent a lot of time talking about how to draft letters that were sufficiently clear and explicit to get the desired results. Spelling, punctuation, and mechanics came in for consid-

erable attention as well, since the students were determined not to appear "uneducated." This activity was a valuable one because most of the students had little or no experience with letter writing as a way of communicating with strangers; they were delighted to find that adults in distant places whom they had never met took their letters seriously and responded to them in kind.

Another activity took shape because the students in the control group, when called upon to write, voiced the common complaint of students everywhere--they couldn't think of anything to write about. So they were invited to tape record their views about the significance of being Chicano. Predictably, they had plenty to say, and these taped statements furnished raw material for written essays to be shared with other students in the group.

Throughout the project, the control group leader tried to emphasize the reality of written communication. Writing merely as a school exercise was avoided in favor of writing with a real purpose and a tangible audience. Given the short duration of the project, no dramatic improvement in their writing skills was expected, and none resulted. But there appeared to be a significant gain in their understanding of the writing process and the value of effective written English.

7. Problems Encountered: Junior High School. A number of difficulties arose directly or indirectly because of the project's late start. By scheduling meetings three times a week instead of twice, it was possible to get nearly as much class time as had originally been envisioned, but both staff planning and student participation suffered from the necessity of forcing the pace, and it seems likely that the classroom activities would have been more effective spread over a longer time span. Having to get the project going on a "crash program" basis also resulted in a shaky start for the control group, whose leader was a last-minute addition to the project staff and whose activities had not been planned in as much detail as those of the experimental group. There is no evidence that the control group's role in the project was compromised as a result, but a less hectic beginning would probably have enhanced its impact on the students and would certainly have reduced the staff's anxieties. In addition, the haste with which it was necessary to work out arrangements with the school did nothing to improve relations with the regular staff.

Another difficulty that continually plagued the experimental group was bad acoustics. Other shortcomings of the rooms available for project activities were overcome fairly easily, but no solution was found for the echoes and background noise that sometimes rendered the audio reproduction on the videotapes all but inaudible. Even at best, the sound tracks were punctuated by the noise of scraping chairs, coughs, "offstage" conversations and the like which bounced around the room unhindered by any form of sound suppression.

The foregoing problems paled into insignificance, however, beside what can only be described as the harrassment of, and open hostility toward, the project by some segments of the junior high faculty. That some friction should have been generated is not surprising. First of all, by coming in as "outsiders" with a program whose very existence could be interpreted as an implicit criticism of conventional classroom practices, we were naturally re-

garded with some suspicion. Then, to accomodate the project, extensive revisions of the school's daily schedule had to be carried out on extremely short notice, and this doubtless resulted in considerable inconvenience. Added to this, the haste with which the project's classroom activities were begun left no time for advance meetings between faculty and project staff. Not until the project was well under way was there an opportunity for such a meeting, and by that time some serious misunderstandings of the project's aims and methods were in circulation. To make matters worse, the project staff learned about some of the school's established procedures the hard way, by inadvertantly violating them.

These factors however, fell far short of accounting for the antagonism we encountered from the very beginning and which continued unabated throughout the duration of the project. The first two weeks of classroom activities were marked by a series of minor skirmishes over issues ranging from the students' use of first names with the project staff to the impropriety of allowing them to sit on the tables in the home economics room. A complaint from a teacher about students in the control group eating snacks in the classroom and otherwise behaving indecorously brought a fire-breathing invasion of the group by the school counselor which, apart from being a clear case of disciplinary over-kill, placed the control group leader in an extremely awkward position. This was followed by a conference (or perhaps more accurately a confrontation) with the project director in which it was made clear that the project was regarded in some quarters as a serious threat to school discipline. The project staff, though preoccupied with getting the classroom activities off to a good start, therefore made a concerted effort to avoid further conflict, but there was more to come.

During the third week of project activities, a teacher (the same one whose complaint about the control group had precipitated the incident recounted above) entered the classroom one day when the group was in session and, under the pretext of looking for something in a book, kept its activities under close surveillance for about twenty minutes. Needless to say, both the students and the group leader found this intrusion extremely unsettling, and the project director asked the principal for assurance that it would not be repeated. The same teacher also objected to the principal about the control group leader's use of some materials from the school library. In fact, these were found to be unsuitable and were not actually introduced in the classroom (and in any event the teacher's objection was based on a mistaken notion of their contents). Even so, this instance of alleged "misuse" of school materials became a focal point for later criticism of the project. In addition, a number of students in both the experimental and control groups reported being intensively questioned by some of their teachers about what was going on in the project.

To forestall further deterioration in relations between project staff and school personnel, arrangements were made for the project director and research assistant to attend an after-school faculty meeting late in April (the other staff members had conflicting obligations). At this meeting, the director outlined briefly the nature and aims of the project and some of the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic research on which it was based. In the process, it was explained that departures from traditional classroom models were inherent in the nature of the project, but that the students were under no illusion about these departures constituting a licence for unconventional behavior elsewhere in school. The discussion that followed, while it helped clear the air, also revealed how fundamental were the differences between

the project staff and some members of the school faculty.

First of all, the latter supported a policy toward Chicano students that can best be described as coercive assimilation. They saw the school's goal as rapid and complete Anglicization of these students, forcibly if necessary. In their view, recognition of Chicano culture had no place, or at the most only a token place, in the school program. As one teacher put it, "we don't think there should be any special program for these kids; our job is to make good Americans out of them." Thus the project drew fire because it sought to improve the Chicano students self-image and self-confidence and enable them to function better in the Anglo community without relinquishing their Chicano identity.

The activities of the control group, in particular, came under attack because they were intended to promote greater cultural awareness (and also, apparently, because its leader seemed vulnerable, being younger and less experienced than the other staff members--one teacher referred to her repeatedly as "that youngster"). Questions were raised about the "objectivity" of our approach to Chicano culture (so far as we could determine, "objective" in this context meant treating it entirely from an Anglo middle-class viewpoint and avoiding all reference to Chicano social and political activism). We were told that the subject was covered in the eighth grade social studies curriculum, that the materials in the school library were intended exclusively for that purpose, and that discussion elsewhere in the school program was strongly disapproved. We were also advised, in a rather threatening manner, to conform with the district's policy on controversial topics, though on examination this policy turned out to have little relevance to any project activities.

There were also irreconcilable differences over the issue of discipline. It is no exaggeration to say that some members of the school faculty were virtually obsessed with the regulation of student conduct. In over ten years of visiting secondary schools, the project director had never encountered one where student behavior was so narrowly circumscribed, where "law enforcement" occupied so much time and attention, or where mutual hostility between faculty and students was so much in evidence. And while the weight of this repressive authoritarianism was evidently felt by the entire student body, it fell especially heavily on the Chicano students because they were regarded as being potential, if not actual, troublemakers and as being most in need of "shaping up." As an example, the practice of teachers on yard duty breaking up groups of more than two or three Chicano students was represented to us as school policy, partly to prevent them from "stirring things up" and partly to make them associate with Anglo students instead of each other.

In such an environment, the very fact that the project brought Chicano students together in an officially sanctioned way was considered subversive, and the informality of the project groups, together with their emphasis on self-motivated student activity, were perceived as promoting radically bad habits. Indeed, we often did accept modes of student conduct that would have been punished elsewhere in the school. To have enforced all of the petty rules and conventions of classroom decorum (had we even known what they all were) would have left us little time for anything else and reduced our students to almost complete passivity.

It should be stressed that the school faculty was by no means united in subscribing to these views or in opposing our program. Though the "royal we" was widely used by the principal and some teachers, it seldom ap-

peared to represent a clear consensus, and in fact objections to the project seemed confined to a small but vocal group of senior faculty members. On several occasions, other teachers expressed approval of the project to various members of the staff, but it is significant that this praise was always conveyed privately and discreetly, whereas complaints were invariably transmitted through official channels.

There was other evidence as well that a lack of positive leadership was being exploited by a handful of tenured teachers. Though the principal was always courteous in his dealings with the project staff and fully cooperated in making routine arrangements, he seemed unable or unwilling to deal forthrightly with the problems that arose. He characteristically adopted the role of mediator, rather than leader, and seldom seemed to be acting so much as reacting, usually to the hectoring of one or two singularly willful subordinates. Fear of antagonizing some elements in the community may have been involved in this reluctance to take the initiative. Assessment of such an influence is difficult for outsiders, but it is a fact that the principal often cited the need to reckon with community conservatism and, in his first meeting with the project staff, dwelled on the number of St. Helena residents who are wealthy, powerful, and socio-economically reactionary. Whatever the reasons, teachers who favored the project (typically they were younger and untenured) seemed to be largely ignored and even in some respects intimidated by the school administration.

What emerged from the late-April meeting between the project staff and the teachers was thus a kind of uneasy stalemate. Overt opposition largely ceased, since it was clear that district support for the project, together with the autonomy of its staff, rendered this ineffectual. Sniping from the wings continued, however, usually in the form of harrassing students. For instance, one teacher angrily told a student in the control group that she was wasting her time and that the project was "rubbish." Another informed students that participation in the project did not excuse them from completing all the work in their regular English class and that their grades would suffer if they failed to do so. The principal was asked to intervene in this matter, but by then the students were sure they would be penalized when grades were awarded, whether or not they actually were.

In general, students in the project believed they were subject to more rigorous discipline than ever, a conviction that cannot be written off entirely as adolescent paranoia. It can hardly be accidental that disorderly behavior on the part of students in the project groups was found predominantly by teachers who were convinced from the outset that the project undermined order; presumably, they thought it necessary to counteract our "bad influence," and were also, perhaps, bent on having their prophecies of trouble fulfilled. (By contrast, a teacher more favorably disposed toward the project reported to us privately that one student in the class was less of a behavior problem in her class than before the project began.) In any event, there was apparently no recourse for students who felt they were being treated unfairly, once the school's disciplinary machinery had been set in motion. The principal, while admitting that some faculty members were conflict prone, indicated that he felt compelled to support them so that their authority would not be compromised. Gaylen's suspension, mentioned above, furnished a case in point. As previously noted, school procedures provided for only three recommendations, all punitive, when teachers referred discipline problems to the administration: suspension, probation, and detention. The offical line was that these procedures, once invoked, could not be re-

versed (in fact, the principal finally did intervene in Gaylen's case, though hardly in a constructive way).

Thus, in the end, the project staff was left feeling that the student's participation often worked against them in their relations with the school authorities, and that they were ultimately the chief victims of the resentment our program had generated. Indeed, though we believed that the students' experience in the project was valuable and rewarding, we sometimes wondered whether it was worth the trouble it caused them, particularly since there was no possibility that it would be continued. Our misgivings on this score were especially strong on those occasions (there were several) when individual students were reduced to incoherent anger or tears by what seemed to be, in part at least, reprisals against the program (and hence, really, against us).

The conflict between the project staff and the junior high school faculty has been described here in considerable detail not as an excuse for failures, since the project succeeded in spite of it, but because it undoubtedly reduced the impact of the program and complicated the interpretation of its results. The staff felt unanimously that the project's approach was singularly effective with students of junior high age and that the experimental group would have registered a significantly greater improvement in communication skills had it been possible to spend more time and attention on the activities outlined in the research proposal and less fending off interference and trying to neutralize the influence of a hostile situation.

Our experience in the junior high school also furnished an object lesson in the importance of choosing a favorable research setting and establishing positive relations with the regular school staff. We wanted to carry out our experiment in a relatively conventional school in order to show that our achievement did not depend on an environment which encouraged innovation, and in this respect we certainly succeeded. However, we had not bargained for the hazards and distractions of working in a school where there were already deep-rooted internal problems, and where active hostility was virtually inevitable, and these factors complicated our task unnecessarily. Moreover, they were probably rendered needlessly severe by our failure to initiate a dialogue with the regular teaching staff until after a pattern of conflict had already been established. We made the mistake of assuming that support from the district superintendent assured us of full cooperation, when in fact it sometimes guaranteed us no more than a grudging kind of surface civility. And while this naive assumption did not invalidate our research, it introduced variables in the setting and in our students' responses to the program which we had not anticipated.

8. Classroom Activities: Elementary School Group

April 3-7

We started the project with mimetic exercises designed to establish awareness of physical modes and relationships. The exercises included the mirror game, the guessing of "what am I doing?", and "name the object." We also included a dooomed attempt at creating a mimetic circus which emphasized spatial relationships, but which disintegrated into a facsimile of a battlefield. It was premature for the children to work individually on movement.

Since we had no concept of the childrens' linguistic abilities, we attempted to evaluate their language competence (vocabulary, syntax, and accent) by using the guessing technique for the games. It was quickly apparent that most of the children were quite assimilated, at least in the sense of accepting the materialism of the majority culture. "What am I doing?" elicited mime and verbalization of driving a truck, a race car, a bus, making pizza, performing

sundry domestic duties and farm chores, operating medical equipment, etc. It is important to recognize that these children were no strangers to Anglo culture nor to the standard English of the mass media. Their teachers generally indicated that most of the children had possessed English competence for only a short period--usually since their Headstart experience. But we found that most of them had learned from, and spoken English to, their older siblings and/or other English speaking peers in the neighborhood since their toddler days. And quite a few had been exposed to television since early childhood.

In addition to assessing their oral language skills, we also tried to get some indication of their written English competence by asking them to write about what they saw in the mirror exercise. The writing problems this exercise revealed did not reflect "Spanish interference" except in one case. Luis was a small boy, very concerned about masculine images, who spoke infrequently and then in short, simple sentences (the reading specialist felt he was "immature"), and who had a fairly consistent Spanish accent. He wrote:

> I hayt gwrols and I hayt them pikas ther or to much.

Actually, there is a Shavian logic to his spelling of "hayt." "Pikas" evinces the less explosive P's and B's in Spanish and their susceptibility to confusion and inversion. "Gwrols" is idiosyncratic; Luis' pronunciation was, approximately, "Gurls." Generally, the written material ran more like Teresa's:

> I saw someone when I was looking on the mirrow and I was doing things I was wash my hands and some more things and I thought I new how was the girl.

Teresa asked and was told how to spell some of the words. Stella Chacon's writing captured the fragmented imagery of the game:

> I saw my self in the mirrow. and the mirrow fell down and Broke and I saw my self all Broke in the mirrow.

At the end of the week, we found that the boys exacerbated each other into frenzies of disruptive male chauvinism unless we worked seperately and continuously with them. Out of boredom or physical hyperactivity or perhaps something akin to lynch-mob psychology, they would disrupt the group activities on the pretext that they did not want to participate with "gurls." Indeed, the word for the opposite sex was the worst epithet they could call each other. Such behavior is common in second grade boys, of course, whose growing awareness of male roles often takes the form of anti-feminism and whose tendencies toward ego-centricism and showing off make them hard to contain in groups; girls of this age, by contrast, are more likely to envision themselves functioning in established structures (the family, the classroom, the reading group). In some cases, too, the influence of "machismo," inherited from older brothers or playmates, may have been at work. This is not to suggest, however, that the Chicano children are uniquely susceptable to sexism. On the contrary, the school practices sexist segregation in such trivial situations as the forced march back from the play yard, and this obviously reflects the dominant Anglo culture, not the minority one.

April 10-14

We continued the exercises involving concentration during this week. The children were eager to do the mirror exercise and in it showed an ability to create tension and dramatic development. We also did some concentration, memorization, and writing. A number of diverse objects were placed on a table and then removed. The children were to write down the objects they remembered. Since there was much anxiety over correct spellings, we asked a few of the better spellers to serve as editors

and write the words in question on the board. There was also more group observation and guessing games of "where am I going?", "what am I building?", and "what am I eating?". The latter game elicited Mexican, American, and Chinese foods.

It was difficult for the children to remain long at one exercise, partly because it was the end of the regular school day and they were eager to break loose into unrestrained, non-structured physical activity. It seemed, too, as if they had little experience in coordinating group creative efforts. Most of their group activities in the classroom were highly structured and well supervised by an adult. Our activities, in contrast, required highly autonomous, self-directed behavior. At first the children were constantly requesting and demanding the directions and approval of the instructor. Over the weeks, however, they learned to act with a minimum of directions and attention.

April I7-2I

The "where" exercise was introduced this week to develop verbal improvisation. The children were asked to create little scenes located in a jail, a garden, a kitchen, a cafe, and a winery. Except for the jail, the improvisations retained a non-verbal, mimetic quality with the children miming the bottling and corking of wine, the making of tortillas, and the hoeing of vegetables. Later in the week we extended the "where" to a hospital and the children developed dialogue, mostly questions and answers. Two children tried to apply an instrument which they could describe, but not name. It turned out to be an oscilloscope. At one point during the improvisation, Teresa really fell down and hurt herself, and the other children in the cast started to administer first aid--a case of fiction becoming reality. It struck everybody as very funny, and the improvisation ended in laughter.

We also continued the emphasis on spatial and physical modes by use of the "filling" exercise. The children were asked to fill, pass on and empty various containers and to manifest the weight or lack of it in the mime. Some children who either tended to be non-verbal or who showed indications of lacking concentration were excessively self-conscious and never managed to create sense impressions of weight. Through out the project, these children were unwilling to relinquish their self-images (which were not as effective as those of the more freely participating students). It seemed clear that we had to spend a great deal of time acknowledging the image or role the child proferred to us before we could elicit other roles from them.

We role-played a bit with one of the more reluctant children, Luis. He acted the part of a "discipline problem" who has been sent to the principal (Roderigo). Somehow the dialogue turned to other disruptive boys, and a really lovely stichomythia was generated:

Roderigo: Let's talk about my friend Angel.
Other student: Let's talk about my friend David.
Luis: How come we're talking about my friend David?

This little dialogue showed that the children delighted in playing on the variation of proper names and that Luis, presumably a non-speaker of English, was capable of extending the play and naturally transforming a declarative sentence into a question. It seems to contradict the findings of studies like those of Bernstein and Englemann that lower class/disadvantaged

children tend to be unspecific in their almost exclusive use of pronouns.

April 24-28

This was the week of the group fantasy, a most exhilarating (and for the adults involved, enervating) activity. I started the fantasy off by locating the group in an imaginary object which would facilitate logical movement and spacing and narrative development. Thus, we traveled in a space balloon and a submarine, and through a castle. Even though the fantasies were episodic, they had a beginning, middle, and end, so that they were true narrative experiences. In the space balloon fantasy, the children adumbrated a logical universe below the balloon. I would call out questions as to what we could see below and the children would offer a number of one-word responses: a farmer, a cow, a river, a city, etc. When asked, they also added the processes: a farmer milking a cow, or a river flooding a town. At one point in this fantasy we landed in Mexico City (the children's choice) and most of us had to obtain employment, while Angel and Roderigo made housing arrangements for us at a hotel. Some of us made tortillas, some swept, etc., and then we retired to the hotel. We discussed all the things we saw in Mexico City, the bullfights, the street vendors, and the mariachis. When we decided to leave, Angel instructed us to throw our weights overboard while he and Roderigo cut the lines. Angel was extremely knowledgable about the mechanics of balloon flight and indeed about most sophisticated machines.

The castle fantasy took place on a day when we had a substitute camera man, who good-naturedly played the part of the giant and was nearly torn limb from limb by the capturing knights. At some time during this fantasy we decided we wanted to watch a play and several of the children enacted the "The Three Little Bears." One of the girls, Maryanna, thought she didn"t know it and the children told her it was "Los Tres Ojos." The actors insisted on acknowledging the English meter of the story by reciting the exact lines of "It is too hot, it is too cold," etc. If one actor misread a line by saying "It's too hot" the others would correct him, an interesting instance of the children's English competence.

During this week several new children joined our activities. These were either the brothers or sisters or friends of our students who had been told about the activities. Most of them were in first grade and were a little shy about entering into the fantasies of the older, more glamorous second graders. However, these children remained with us for the duration of the project.

May 1-5

This week we picked up on the dramatization of the nursery tales by doing Cinderella and Hansel and Gretal. We also created a group improvisation based on fortune-telling. In the Cinderella improvisation the children spontaneously created props--a bowl served as a pumpkin, a chalk slate with a clock drawn on it was carried by Rosie, the fairy godmother, to announce the fatal hour of transformation, etc. If an actor seemed to do or say the wrong thing to advance the plot, the others would correct him. The children addressed each other by their stage names: Fairy Godmother, Step Mother, Prince, Step Sister, and the like. The ball bogged down because the Prince (Roderigo) was unwilling to two-step with any of the fair damsels.

Many of the children seemed not to know the story of Hansel and Gretel, so the improvisation was marked by interruptions for briefing on the plot. The story was improvised beyond its original limits and many animal characters contributed to the heroes' escape. Luis played Hansel and for the first time did not play Luis. He was obviously happy working out a creation with others.

One day, I brought up the astrological prospects for myself and Barry, both of whom are Leos. Some of the children laughed at the Leo sign, showing that they had the cultural carichature of the animated lion in mind. I explained a bit about the zodiac and prophecy and we decided to do a fortune telling improvisation. Several of the children, Luis, Angel, Roderigo, played the seers and other children came for advice. Rosie knelt in supplication before Angel's slightly profane pronouncements. I played a turbanned, defrauded old lady seeking legal advice and the improvisation moved into a trial. The forms of legallity current in this country were mostly outside the children's experience, but they proved game to invent a new concept of justice. Angel, playing the avenging angel, prosecutor, and sheriff seemed to have derived most of his judicial finesse from television: "We got dis guy in custody" was his frequent utterance. Teresa also played a prosecutor and came up with an interesting variation of the usual "You better tell the truth"--her version was "You better say the truth." I think she may have been influenced by the Spanish verb "declarar"--which translates as "state, affirm, testify" and would be a more appropriate verb to use in a trial situation than either "hablar" (speak or talk) or "decir" (say or tell)-- but she probably didn't know all the English equivalents and had to draw on the simplest. In addition to these phrases, most of the children used some form of the double negative--"I didn't do nothin'"--a common construction for children of their age, regardless of ethnic or socioeconomic background.

May 8-June 2

At this point, we thought it would be beneficial to the children to bring in books and read aloud from them and then enact the stories. This definitely encouraged the children to read and several brought in books from the school library. This program was followed for the duration of the project. I also tried to correlate Spanish with literature by asking for Spanish equivalents of words in the English texts. I would ask in Spanish--¿como se dice?and would often receive phrases and sentences translated into Spanish. It seemed as if this helped to break down the rigid distinction between spoken language and "proper writing."

James Joyce's The Cat and The Devil was translated into a mass with Rosie officiating as priest. Actually, this improvisation was more a result of the children preparing for their first communion than of Joyce's playful story. There was argument and emotional intensity over the correctness of form and order of the mass. Rosie also performed a marriage ceremony, but the funeral did not go off very well as the corpse was unwilling to lie prone, in spite of Rosie's theocratic whacks. The children showed that they could recreate in English anything within their realm of experience. However, most of them had not been to requiem masses and therefore this improvisation lacked sincerity and coherence.

Two children gave evidence of complete bilingualism in two different incidents. Rosie said she knew a long story which she wanted to tell in Spanish and English. She seems to have memorized the story from Spanish and recited it in both languages in a stacatto rythym. The story was incredibly long and involved the picaresque adventures of an elderly couple searching for food. Even more striking was Estella's performance in "teaching" Spanish. She, Judith, Catalina and Linda decided to give Barry a lesson in Spanish (Judith turned out to be much more animated in Spanish than she ever was in English). Estella was formidable and took over the inquisition of poor Barry. She spoke entirely in Spanish while I translated for Barry and he answered in English. She called him "deaf" and a "burro" because he didn't know Spanish, told him that he should go to school to learn it, and kept asking him if "you will listen to me?" It was evident that Estella connected learning with listening, a natural assumption for someone who has mastered another language mostly by listening to it and one which may also reflect the passive student role in most formal education.

Estella's control over both English and Spanish was not only fluent but inventive and whimsical. At one point, for example, she asked Barrie's age and then made a bilingual pun on his having thirty "ears"instead of "years." Yet before the video was on Estella referred to herself as "pocho," indicating that she did not regard her use of Spanish as measuring up to educated standards. Paradoxically, many of the students were proud of their ability to speak Spanish yet apologetic about the kind of Spanish they spoke. The few children who didn't speak Spanish fairly well or who showed some reticence about speaking it were invariably from Texas, and among Chicanos generally it seems to be recognized that Texas Spanish is "poor" Spanish. (In this connection, it might be mentioned that the students in the Healdsburg summer program who had the most literacy problems were from Texas, suggesting a possible connection between linguistic self-image and linguistic achievement). Since the majority culture (and especially its schools) generally teaches Chicano students that their English is defective as well, the result is that children with vastly more linguistic competence than their mono-lingual counterparts often become painfully self-conscious about their speech and, in extreme cases, virtually traumatized by their alleged inability to speak or write either language "correctly."

In the last few weeks of the project, the activities in the experimental group reached a kind of plateau. The students obviously were not ready for more complicated and sustained kinds of dramatic exercises, and they seemed to find what they were doing both instructive and enjoyable, so it was decided not to risk these benefits by forcing experiences on them which promised to be more frustrating than challenging.

In the elementary school control group, as at the junior high, the emphasis was on promoting self-awareness and self-esteem through reading and writing activities. Use of the cafeteria in effect ruled out audio-visual aids except for a casette audio recorder, and the students' elementary literacy skills imposed severe limitations on the kinds of written materials that could be used. Consequently, in this group the program was more an extension of, rather than an innovative departure from, the students' regular classroom instruction. The group did afford an opportunity for greater informality and more personal interaction with the group leader and other students, however, as well as intensive experience in using the

language in a variety of modes. And the students seemed to respond well to the non-authoritarian nature of the group's organization, though it must be added that they gave little evidence of feeling threatened or intimidated by what went on in their regular classes.

9. Problems Encountered: Elementary School Group. It is a pleasure to record here that the staff of St. Helena Elementary School was friendly and cooperative in every respect, in marked contrast to the conflict and antagonism we encountered at Stevenson Junior High School. Whatever the elementary school people may have thought of us and our program privately, they did their best to make us welcome and to support our activities, and such minor problems as did arise were discussed with candor and resolved with dispatch. Perhaps this was true in part because the project activities followed the regular elementary school day rather than intruding on it, and thus seemed less threatening and unsettling there than at the junior high. However, we are inclined to attribute the difference mostly to the elementary school principal's effective leadership and genial, self-confident administrative style. Whatever the reasons, it was always a relief to leave the "up-tight" world of the junior high behind for the elementary school's more relaxed and hospitable atmosphere.

The most serious difficulties we experienced at the elementary school resulted more or less directly from the hour at which our activities were scheduled. Meeting with the students from 2 to 3 p.m., immediately following the end of their regular classes, meant that attendence was entirely voluntary and that we were competing with a variety of other activities. In the circumstances, a gratifying number of students stayed with us from beginning to end, but turnover was nevertheless high and this greatly complicated evaluation of the project's effects (not surprisingly, attrition was especially high in the control group, which lacked either the congenial setting or the fascinating TV hardware of the experimental group). In terms of numbers alone, dropouts from the program were offset by later additions, as those who found the project activities rewarding brought in their friends. But while such recruitment was flattering, it contributed little to the research aspects of the program.

Another problem that seemed directly related to the meeting time was the students' restlessness and susceptibility to distractions. First and second graders are apt to have short attention spans at best, and after being confined in classrooms all day our students had trouble concentrating and needed to release some of their pent-up energy through vigorous exercise. Hence, in order to get anything done at all, the project staff found it necessary to tolerate a high noise level and a lot of more or less random physical activity. The students apparently had no trouble coping with the confusion that sometimes resulted, but the staff found their adult nervous systems getting overloaded on occasion.

An additional cause for concern was the lack of a suitable room for the control group. The room used by the experimental group, though less than ideal, was at least a comfortable and congenial setting with furnishings that were easily rearranged to meet the needs of the moment. But the control group was relegated to the cafeteria, a bleak barn-like place with massive tables and benches in irrevocably straight rows. The group leader made the best of it, since it was the only place available, but it was hard to generate much enthusiasm in such a cheerless atmosphere and this probably contributed a lot to the chronic absenteeism.

Finally, the students' immaturity and inexperience placed a lot of limitations on the nature and development of project activities. First and second graders can only handle so much complexity, and increasing

sophistication in the dramatic exercises came much more slowly than with the junior high students. This is not to say that students in the primary grades are too young to profit from experiences in creative dramatics. On the contrary, our program seemed in some cases to promote significant advances in socialization and language skills, and reports from teachers indicated that this progress was visible in the classroom. However, the full potential of classroom dramatics in the primary grades was especially difficult to demonstrate in the short period available for this project.

10. Evaluation. The evaluation of minority students' language skills is notoriously difficult (Severson and Guest 1970). For a variety of cultural reasons, Mexican-American children may not approach test-taking with the same motivation and attitude as the middle-class Anglo students whose performance establishes the test norms (Brussell 1968; Severson and Guest 1970). Furthermore, standardized language tests necessarily assume that there is only one correct response for each test item (Severson and Guest 1970: 312-13), an assumption that runs directly counter to the realities of language use; as outlined in Appendix A, linguistic effectiveness and appropriateness involve far too many interacting variables to measure in simplistic terms. In addition, standardized tests often tend to confuse language skills with other factors (e.g., inferential ability, cultural experience) and to ignore the effects of such obvious variables as dialect differences in pronunciation (Calfee and Venezky 1969). Consequently, Severson and Guest, though optimistic about the long-range prospects for reliable standardized language testing of minority students, conclude that "one must accept with considerable caution the current use of standardized tests with disadvantaged children" (1970: 329), and this seems, if anything, an understatement.

Added to this difficulty, it is hardly possible at present to isolate a limited number of specific, statistically measureable variables of language behavior which correlate closely with the overall performance the project activities were intended to promote. An intensive review of available standardized tests left the writers convinced that no such instrument presently exists whose results have much value in assessing overall linguistic performance. And since revising the project's goals to make them more easily measurable would largely defeat its purpose, we decided to make no direct use of standardized testing.

Instead, an alternative method, more comprehensive though less exact, was adopted. Students in the project were divided into experimental and control groups of approximately equal size. To compare the oral language skills of the two groups, linguistic performances of several minutes in length by the students in both groups were videotaped at the beginning of the project and again at the end, using a format analogous to that of the television "talk shows" in which several students at a time conversed informally with the interviewer (in this case, the project director) while seated at a table. Segments of the resulting tapes were then viewed in random order by a panel of educated middle-class Anglo adults, who were asked to assess impressionistically the overall communicative effectiveness of each performance by each student, as well as judging such broad aspects of linguistic and social behavior as fluency, clarity, nervousness, aggressiveness, and the like.

This procedure obviously lacked the precision and objectivity usually sought in studies of human behavior. Given the aims of the project, however, precise measurements of student performance seemed of little practical value even if we had known how to make them. The ultimate goal of

the project activities (as, presumably, with all school language arts instruction) was that of making the students better able to cope with the linguistic demands of the social world outside the classroom. And in "real-time" social situations, linguistic effectiveness and appropriateness are scarcely ever judged in precise and objective ways. On the contrary, they are evaluated mostly unconsciously and intuitively, on the basis of complex criteria internalized through years of experience. It is a truism of sociolinguistics that few people can explain at all accurately why they respond to the linguistic performances of others as they do, and that most attempts at explanation apparently have little relation to the realities of either the speaker's or the listener's behavior. Yet, for all their impressionism, judgments about the use of language are no less real, nor are their social consequences. We felt, therefore, that what mattered most was not the way our students were actually using English so much as how their use of it was perceived by those people in the majority culture whose acceptance or rejection was likely to significantly influence their social and economic futures, and it was the latter that our evaluation procedures were intended to reveal.

For this reason, the evaluation process was set up to insure that the panelists' responses would be as intuitive and unself-conscious as possible. The evaluators viewed the tapes in relaxed, non-institutional settings--usually their own homes or the homes of close friends. They were instructed to record their impressions without attempting to analyze or rationalize them, and the tapes were presented in a way that provided little opportunity for cogitation; each segment was played only once, with no more than a brief pause afterward for the responses to be recorded. The arbitrary pigeon-holing implicit in multiple-choice forms was avoided by asking the panelists to place marks at appropriate points on a set of undivided linear rating scales (see sample form and instruction sheet, Appendix B). Furthermore, the specifics of verbal and paralinguistic behavior they were asked to judge were identified in the broadest, most neutral terms possible, and no explanations or definitions were provided for the terms employed

A total of eight volunteer evaluators contributed to the assessment phase of the project; because evaluating the tapes proved very time-consuming, not all of the evaluators viewed all of the tape segments, but every segment was scored by at least five panelists. Those who were invited to take part were selected not as a cross-section of the Anglo middle-class but rather as representative members of what Martin Joos (1967) calls the "responsibility" community--that is, those who have a pre-eminent role in setting social and linguistic standards because they are largely responsible for day-to-day decision-making in the dominant culture. Hence they were generally above average in education, income, and social status. All had at least a B.A. degree plus some post-graduate education or training; most had M.A.'s, and one had a doctorate. They represented a wide variety of occupations--among them were a corporation executive, a banker, a self-employed retail merchant, a consulting psychologist, a systems designer, and a stock broker--but all held professional, technical, or managerial positions. Only one was an educator and he was a secondary school counselor whose teaching background was in the social sciences rather than the language arts. Most were relatively cosmopolitan. Their birthpalces ranged in size from Petaluma, Calif. to Los Angeles and were as widely scattered as New Haven, St. Paul, Cleveland, and Trenton, N.J. Most had spent at least part of their lives in urban areas and in other states than California. In age they ranged from 29 to 52, with most in their mid-30's to early 40's; two were women; and all but one had child-

ren. In short, they typified the kinds of Americans whose use of the language defines "standard English" and whose values and prejudices, in the long run, determine social and occupational acceptability.

On both the initial and final evaluation tapes, the topics for discussion were the same for all students, and were selected with an eye to minimizing individual differences in background and experience. For the first set of tapes, the students were asked to describe the kind of house they might want to live in with the other members of their interview group, if they could design any kind of home they wanted. In general, this topic was a fortunate choice, for most of the students seemed to find "brainstorming" an ideal house enjoyable and were able to describe their visions in concrete detail. At the end of the project, we began making the second set of evaluation tapes by asking the students what they planned to do during the summer. This topic was less successful since their plans were generally vague and largely the same (swimming in the high school pool was repeatedly cited), so there was relatively little to talk about. However, the first tape of the second set had to be scrapped due to a malfunctioning microphone--fortunately, as it turned out--and we were able to remake this tape on another topic(We were apprehensive that students who were taped twice would perform differently than those who were taped only once, but in fact there was no discernable difference). Having found on the initial set of evaluation tapes that the students' fantasy world was more interesting than their real one, we therefore asked them to exercise their imaginations again by talking about what they would do during summer if they could do anything they wished, unhampered by barriers of age, parental permission, or money. Once more, the responses were both prolific and specific, with the choices ranging from world travel to training horses to visiting the moon. On the whole, the evaluation procedures outlined here served their intended purpose well. Though it often proved difficult to determine exactly what linguistic and paralinguistic features stimulated the evaluators' responses, the responses themselves were surprisingly uniform, suggesting that they were based on a good deal more than whimsy and that the evaluators generally agreed on what constituted effective oral communication. Furthermore, by attempting to measure the full range of linguistic performance in a realistic social situation, we probably came about as close as possible in a school environment to realizing the ideal expressed by Severson and Guest (1970: 326) as "assess(ing) behavior in the setting where change is desired," namely, the social world outside the classroom.

11. Summary of Activities. Begun in haste and carried out over a much shorter period than was needed for maximum impact, the project activities nevertheless proceeded largely according to plan. Especially in the elementary school, more time would have allowed futher development of the program and yielded more, and more significant, results. And in the junior high school, the unfortunate emergence of open hostility toward the project from a few of the regular teachers upset the students and distracted the staff. Nevertheless, the project provided valuable experience in the classroom applications of creative dramatics and especially in ways of using them to promote language skills.

RESULTS

The outcome of the project's evaluation procedures is presented graphically in Appendix C. Shown there are the evaluator's assessments of performance on the evaluation tapes for all students in both the second grade and junior high groups who appeared on both sets of tapes. These results can be summarized as follows.

1. Despite the impressionistic character of the evaluations, agreement among the evaluators was remarkably close. Response to a given aspect of a single student performance seldom varied over more than about one quarter of the rating scale for that item, and never did so on the first scale ("communicates well/communicates poorly") which measured overall communicative effectiveness. Furthermore, significant differences in judgment were confined almost entirely to non-linguistic aspects of behavior ("seems relaxed/seems nervous," "seems friendly/seems hostile," etc.). Whatever it was about the students' performance that shpaed the evaluators' judgments, the judgments themselves were for the most part highly consistent.

2. The attempt to isolate salient aspects of the students' performance and determine their correlation with overall communicative effectiveness largely failed. Though some respondents were more discriminating than others, the scores for the various dimensions of behavior singled out on the rating form generally paralleled those on the "communicates well/communicates poorly" scale very closely. The greatest variations occurred in assessing non-linguistic elements of the students' performance (notably on the aggressiveness--passiveness scale) but even there the response seemed heavily influenced by adjacent ones and especially by the evaluator's impression of general skill in communication.

3. Though the evaluators viewed the tape segments in random order and were not told when the various segments had been recorded, they found every student's performance on the second set of tapes more effective than on the first. This finding can be explained in various ways, of course, but it seems reasonable to attribute at least some of the improvement to the students' experience in the project, the common denominator of which was ample opportunity to use English in actual or simulated "real time," non-school-oriented activities.

4. Collectively, the students in the experimental groups were judged to have improved significantly more between the first and second evaluation tapes than the students in the control groups. Almost all of them registered at least as much improvement as the average gain shown by control group students, and nearly half of those in the experimental groups were regarded as having made notably more progress in communicative effectiveness than the students in the control groups. In addition, the greatest gains were made by students who seemed most in need of improvement. Several of those in the experimental group whose performances on the first set of tapes were scored well below mid-scale by the evaluators placed well above the middle the second time around, a particularly dramatic change in view of the project's short duration. These results confirmed the project staff's view that a number of students had made striking progress toward a more fluent and self-confident use of English as a result of their participation in the project.

5. Among the specifically linguistic dimensions of performance singled out on the rating forms, the one eliciting the most clearly independent judgments was, not surprisingly, "has no accent/has noticeable

accent." Even in this care, however, the responses generally seemed to be governed more by the evaluator's judgement of general effectiveness than by the actual presence or absence of phonological interference from Spanish. Such interference is notoriously among the most durable aspects of inter-language influence and could hardly have changed significantly during the brief period between the two sets of evaluation tapes, yet the evaluators consistently perceived less evidence of "accent" in the second set than in the first. A contributing factor may have been the low fidelity of the video soundtracks, which made it difficult to detect many of the more subtle differences in pronunciation and intonation that characterize "Spanish accents" in English, This fact alone, however, hardly accounts for the regularity with which more "accent" was attributed to students who spoke reluctantly and awkwardly than to those who were more articulate, irrespective of all but the most obvious signs of phonological interference.

CONCLUSIONS

The outcome of an experiment as limited in scope and duration as the one described here must, of course, be very cautiously interpreted. Ten weeks of classroom experience with sixty or so students in two schools cannot be said to demonstrate anything conclusively, especially in view of the uncontrolled variables that always complicate the study of human behavior. Nevertheless, the results summarized above appear to establish the success of the project and to support its underlying assumptions. Accordingly, the following generalizations are advanced as hypotheses that deserve to be tested over a longer period, on a larger scale, and with a wider variety of students.

1. Socially effective use of language involves complex petterns of linguistic and paralinguistic behavior which, at present, remain only partly understood. Furthermore, as the responses to our evaluation tapes illustrate, language performances are generally perceived, largely unconsciously, as linguistic gestalten the component parts of which are not readily analyzed. For the most part, such factors as fluency, self-confidence, and adaptability to listeners and situation seem more important than details of pronunciation, grammar, and usage. Since attention to the latter is a major part of traditional school English curricula, it follows that for practical purposes much of what is usually taught in school about English is trivial, and that most of what is important cannot be "taught," in the customary sense, but rather is learned from experience. This observation is strongly supported by current psycholinguistic theory (see Appendix A), which recognizes the largely intuitive nature of language learning and reveals serious limitations on the use of conscious study, systematic analysis, and artificial drill as means to increase language skills.

2. If it is true, as both common sense and scholarly research indicate, that language is learned chiefly by using it, then the conventional classroom is a singularly bad environment for language learning. The students, who need as much practice in real communication as possible, in fact get very little of it (and are usually punished for talking at all except in certain rather artificial ways); it is the teacher who, needing the practice least, does most of the talking. Moreover, such two-way communication as does take place in the classroom is almost invariably confined to a narrow range of styles and to a single register which has little or no currency in the world outside the school. These limitations on classroom language experience make it, at worst, a waste of time for many students, since they are able to observe and practice outside of school a fairly broad spectrum of linguistic performance, including those modes which have high success value in Anglo middle-class culture. Students from minority cultures, on the other hand, are often deprived of such opportunities, especially if their native language is not English. To become more socially effective users of English, they need to gain experience in ways of using language that are used and valued in the majority community, and to become more familiar with the social and situational criteria which govern their appropriateness.

3. Creative dramatics offers a highly effective way of providing, in schools, the practice in using English for a wide variety of purposes and in a broad range of situations that minority students need but often

do not get elsewhere. This approach encourages the rapid transformation of latent linguistic competence into actual performance. It promotes self-confidence in speaking appropriately and effectively and in adapting to unfamiliar circumstances, and thus enhances self-esteem. It affords a non-threatening environment for experimentation with alternative social roles and their corresponding linguistic and behavioral styles. It invites the vigorous and creative exercise of the imagination. It involves students as active participants in a mutual discovery process, rather than as passive recipients of someone else's (often doubtfully relevant) wisdom. Finally, at least on the evidence of the project described here, it works.

4. The use of creative dramatics to promote improvement in language skills can be adapted to students of widely different ages and achievement levels. Viewed as a broad approach to language learning needs and to self-realization in general, rather than rigorous methodology, it encompasses many kinds of activities and can be tailored in form, complexity, and sequence to the needs of virtually any student population.

5. Dramatic activities can be accomodated easily in most conventional school environments. While the typical classroom may be far from an ideal setting for improvised dramatics, it is a workable one; the only absolute requirement is a fairly large clear area and some moveable furniture that can serve as rudimentary props. Little in the way of other resources is needed. Some activities are enhanced by the use of simple costuming and makeup, but these can be provided at little cost by using cast-off clothing and dime-store cosmetics. As for audio-visual equipment, at least the occasional use of videotape recording can contribute a great deal to the impact of classroom dramatics, and audio tape equipment, which is available in most schools, can also be used to good effect; however, none of this is essential.

6. Classroom dramatics are also easy to fit into existing curricula, either in special elective programs or regular classrooms, provided only that the school is more interested in creative learning experiences than Draconian discipline. Of course, like all new instructional approaches, it can only be implemented at the expense of something else that is already in the school program, but the notable unsuccess of traditional language arts instruction, especially with minority students, makes some modest experimentation easy to justify in most schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The encouraging results of the small-scale experiment reported here argue strongly, we believe, for more ambitious research on the applications of creative dramatics to language instruction, and particularly to the language learning problems of minority students. Apart from gaining further classroom experience in more diverse situations and with a wider vairety of students such research might profitably seek answers to the following questions, among others.

1. Does sustained use of creative dramatics produce proportionate gains in linguistic performance, or is there a point of diminishing returns? If so, where is it?

2. Are there optimum ages or stages of development at which students are especially receptive to classroom dramatics, and at which this approach is especially effective?

3. Is there an optimum frequency and intensity for dramatic activities in the classroom, and does this vary according to grade level? Do concentrated doses of such activities produce better results than occasional experiences spread over a longer period?

4. Is creative dramatics inherently more effective with some students than others, and if so what variables seem to govern its effectiveness? What kinds of refinements and modifications are involved in adapting this approach to different student populations?

5. How can the use of creative dramatics to promote language leaning be combined with other uses of this approach to yield an integrated, drama-centered language arts curriculum along the lines suggested by James Moffett? In practice, how would such a curriculum compare in effectiveness with more traditional ones, or with other unconventional curriculum models?

Answers to these questions might go a long way toward overcoming some of the failings that seem endemic in conventional language arts instruction, which now typically does the most good for those who least need it while serving mostly to frustrate and demean those whose linguistic limitations constitute serious social and educational handicaps.

APPENDIX A

Improving the Language Skills of English-Speaking Mexican-Americans: Background and Issues

Recent developments in psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics have reopened so many basic questions about approaches and methods in language teaching, and raised so many new ones, that experiments in language instruction--even very modest ones--need to be planned with an acute awareness of underlying assumptions and issues. The alternative is to become, in Kochman's words (1969:88), "almost exclusively concerned with... 'how to teach it' /and/ gratuitously deaf to the logically antecedent question of 'whether to teach it at all.'" Therefore, it seems desirable to include here a survey of the findings and theories in this area which apply to English instruction for Mexican-American students, and on which this proposal is based. And since such a survey can scarcely do justice to the complexity of the issues in a page or two, it is included here, together with the bibliography, as an appendix.

1. The Language Competence of Mexican-American Students

In examining the aims and methods of English instruction for Mexican-American students, it is well to begin by emphasizing the difference between those who already know English and those who do not. For though this distinction is both elementary and obvious, educators have often failed to grasp its full significance. The difference between knowing scarcely any English and knowing quite a lot of English is not merely one of degree, as is commonly assumed. For, as the generative/transformational* linguists have shown, knowing a language--that is, being able to use it more or less freely as a means of communication--involves a great deal more than knowing an inventory of its words, pronunciations, and grammar--in G/T terms, its surface structure features. To know a language is to know its underlying patterns--in G/T terms, its generative grammar--and be able to use this finite system to create an infinite number of utterances, including many the speaker has never heard or said before (Chomsky 1966, 1968).

Obviously, the generative system of a language is not learned all at once. But neither is it acquired gradually, bit by bit; rather, it comes in what may be described as a series of quantum leaps (Newmark and Reibel 1968). And any student who is able to carry on a connected conversation in any variety of English has already grasped the underlying system of the language, regardless of how limited his repertoire of surface structure forms may be or how far removed from the forms of English taught in the schools (Labov 1969:19-22; Lance 1969 cited in Ervin-Tripp 1970:337). It follows from this that the language learning needs of the non-English speaker are quite different from those of the student who already knows

*Hereafter abbreviated G/T.

some form of the language, and that the first step in planning English instruction for Mexican-American students is to find out what kind of competence in English they already have.

The latter point is especially important because competence--control over the underlying system--and performance--actual use of the language under specific conditions--have so often been confused in measuring the language skills of minority students. School personnel have frequently taken low scores on standardized tests and inability or unwillingness to use school English as prima facie evidence of unfamiliarity with the language in any form, and have been quick to conclude that the language problems of Mexican-American students invariably stem from a lack of competence in English. The fact is, however, that non-English-speaking students are a much smaller part of the total Mexican-American school population than is commonly assumed (Metcalf 1971). Reliable statistics on language competence are difficult to find, but the vast majority of Mexican-Americans are native-born and urban (Barrett 1966; Rodriguez 1969), and relatively few of these are so isolated from the English-speaking majority that they have not acquired some ability to speak at least one dialect of English by the time they reach school age. Consequently, schools with large Mexican-American populations sometimes have only a few truly non-English-speaking students and occasionally have none at all. Of course, this is not to deny the urgency of providing instruction in English as a second language, either in special courses or bilingual programs, for those who need it. But it does suggest the undesirability of indiscriminately assigning Mexican-Americans to ESL programs, a point one of the writers has made at some length elsewhere (Hendrickson 1971). And it also underlines the importance of understanding more clearly and meeting more directly the language learning needs of the many Mexican-American students who already possess considerable competence in English.

Before leaving the subject of Mexican-American students' language competence, something should be said about the influence of the bilingual speakers' Spanish on their English. Educators have often considered the use of Spanish pronunciations and word order in English as evidence of "interference" between one language and the other which handicaps the student in perfecting his English, and have even referred to a "hybrid" language (sometimes called "Spanglish") which is supposed to consist of elements from both Spanish and English. However, while the language learning implications of bilingualism are far from well understood, there is general agreement among scholars working in this area that linguistic interference is largely fictional (e.g., Fishman 1968; Haugen 1970; Mackey 1970), and that the real interference with language learning is mostly cultural (Ervin-Tripp 1970; see also below, p.21). There is no such thing as a "hybrid" language except in the trivial sense that word-borrowing from Spanish into English and vice-versa is extensive among bilingual Mexican-Americans, though under some circumstances bilinguals may in conversing with each other switch rapidly back and forth from Spanish to English, sometimes even in the same sentence (Gumperz 1970). And neither word-borrowing nor code-switching appear to interfere with the language-learning process in any significant way.

2. English Instruction For English-Speaking Mexican-Americans

Apart from the problem of teaching English as a second language, the goals of English instruction for Mexican-American students can be defined in the same terms as for English instruction in general: literacy and social mobility. It is almost universally agreed that all students should be able to read English easily and write it effectively, both as an educational tool and a prerequisite for later social and economic success. There is also widespread agreement about the desirability of teaching those forms of English which facilitate upward social mobility. And both aims are especially important in educating Mexican-American students, since they often have scant experience with reading and writing except in school and are likely to speak English in ways the majority culture associates, rightly or wrongly, with ignorance and irresponsibility.

Since this proposal is not directly concerned with the development of literacy skills, the goal of teaching Mexican-American students to read and write will be discussed here only briefly, and only insofar as it seems related to the development of language skills in general. G/T linguists point out that writing is not a direct representation of speech, as most approaches to reading instruction assume (e.g., Fries 1963), but rather that speech and writing are different, though roughly parallel, surface structure representations of the same generative system (Chomsky 1964; Halle 1969; Reed 1970). This view is confirmed by evidence that mature readers convert written symbols not to spoken ones but directly to deep structures (Bever and Bower 1966), and that they may even in some sense transfer information straight from the symbols on the page without any kind of intervening language mediation (Kolers 1969). And it explains why speakers of non-standard English may have great difficulty reading a standard English sentence aloud word-for-word or repeating it verbatim, yet are able to demonstrate their grasp of its meaning by paraphrasing it easily and accurately in their own dialect (Labov 1967, cited in Gleitman and Gleitman 1971:30-31; Troike 1969:66).

Though its applications are far from clear as yet, this conception of the speech-writing relationship suggests that learning to read and write is not a unique and isolated activity but part of an overall language-learning Gestalt involving the same generative processes and faculties as other aspects of language acquisition. It would follow, therefore, that literacy can best be taught in a situation rich in other modes of language performance. This notion is borne out by Loban's (1963) discovery of a high correlation between oral fluency (regardless of dialect) and reading skill, and also by the work of Jorstad (1971) and M. Williams (1970), among others. As Wilkinson says (1970), "We cannot separate oracy from literacy /for/ it is part and parcel of the verbalization of experience."

Turning to the subject of language instruction for increased social mobility, this has usually been understood to mean teaching standard English through error correction, grammar lessons, usage and pronunciation drills, and the like, while at the same time discouraging or even

suppressing the use of non-standard forms. In fact, non-standard usage has generally been regarded as corrupt and defective, suitable only for the most rudimentary kinds of communication. And this attitude has recently been reinforced by a number of psychologists and educators who claim that "the language of culturally deprived children...is not merely an underdeveloped version of standard English, but is a basically non-logical mode of expressive behavior" (Bereiter et. al. 1966:113), and thus constitutes a barrier not only to social mobility but to intellectual development as well (e.g., Bereiter and Engelmann 1966, Deutsch, Katz and Jensen 1968).

Sociolinguists, on the other hand, have been unanimous in rejecting this view and condemning the research which allegedly validates it as biased and methodologically naive in the extreme (e.g., Baratz 1969a; Labov, 1969; Stewart 1969); Labov's analysis of its shortcomings is especially devastating. It is a truism in linguistics, confirmed by a large and diverse body of evidence, that non-standard dialects are in no sense degenerate offshoots of the prestige dialect, but rather are fully formed variants of the language with their own history and internal consistency and with neither more nor less inherent capacity to express concepts and logical relationships (Stewart 1971:131-32). Consequently, the only reason--though it may well be reason enough--for teaching standard English to minority students is the strong tendency in the majority culture to stigmatize non-standard dialects and discriminate against their users.

3. Bidialectalism

Recognizing these facts, sociolinguists have called for the abandonment of what Shuy (1969) calls "Bonnie and Clyde" tactics in favor of a bidialectal approach to English instruction for minority students (e.g., Baratz 1969b; Creswell 1964; Haugen 1964; Johnson 1969, 1971), in which standard English supplements rather than replaces the English the students already speak. Since children who speak a non-standard dialect do so because it is the prevailing one in their homes and community, they are not likely, in Johnson's words (1969:78), to "give up a functional dialect... for /one/ which is nonfunctional or dysfunctional." Furthermore, insisting that they forsake their native way of speaking is equivalent to demanding that they renounce their culture and origins, forcing them in effect to choose between rejecting the school and rejecting themselves. Either way, psychological damage seems inevitable. However, when standard English is regarded as an alternative dialect to be used only when appropriate, there is no reason to disparage the student's native dialect or discourage its use. Learning standard English then becomes something like learning a foreign language, which is done not because the target language is intrinsically better but simply because knowing it helps in communicating with and gaining acceptance from those who speak it.

This bidialectal approach is clearly a major forward step in English instruction for minority students. Still, it leaves a great many questions unanswered, as critics like Sledd (1969) and Kochman (1969) have pointed

out. Some of these questions are practical ones. How can standard English as a second dialect be taught? By foreign language teaching methods, and if so which ones? By lessons and drill? Kochman (1969:87) observes drily that in the latter case "the input...is prodigious and the results negligible." Other questions are cultural. Is the ability to use standard English really the kind of magic formula for socioeconomic success that educators sometimes represent it to be? The students themselves are seldom so naive as to think so (Cf. Kochman 1969:88), and unless they are convinced that standard English is worth learning even the most ingenious and intensive instruction is likely to be ineffective. Still other questions are ultimately moral. What right do educators have to insist that minority students adopt the speech patterns of the white middle class? Why not try to change the attitudes of the majority culture toward minority cultures and dialects instead? For such difficult and complex issues there are no easy and simple answers.

Whatever the merits of bidialectal English instruction, it is scarcely possible at present for Mexican-American students since so little is known about the details of Mexican-American English. To be effective, bidialectal teaching must zero in on those points at which standard English and the students' English are significantly different. However, the data currently available about Mexican-American dialects of English is sketchy and fragmentary (Metcalf 1971). Only after several years of field work will sociolinguists be in a position to describe the salient contrasts between Mexican-American English and standard English with any assurance.

A less obvious but equally crucial problem is that of defining standard English itself, the English of "those who make important decisions in the speech community" (McDavid 1969b:54). Everyone agrees that it exists; the trouble starts with trying to decide exactly who its speakers are. Given the wide range of values and lifestyles that coexist (and sometimes conflict) in present-day American Society, full accord is hard to reach on who sets standards in any area of behavior, and language is no exception. Furthermore, however standard English may be delineated, the practices of its speakers are far from uniform. Precisely how a bank president talks, for instance, will vary widely according to where he is from, how old he is, who he is talking to, what he is talking about, how formal the situation is, and a vast number of other personal, social, and situational variables (Creswell 1964; Joos 1967, McDavid 1969, 1969b). And to say that bank presidents almost always speak standard English, while no doubt true, provides no information about these other important dimensions of language variation.

One way around this dilemma is to describe what standard English is not by specifying the shibboleths that its speakers invariably avoid, thus in effect updating the linguistic "thou-shalt-nots" of traditional English instruction. But even negative criteria that are fully reliable are few and far between. Many features that have been confidently identified as non-standard turn out to be widely used by well educated and eminently respectable people. For instance, though Dillard (1969) claims the vowels of "ten" and "tin" are different in standard English, many cultivated speakers in the south habitually pronounce these words alike, and their

practice seems to be spreading rapidly in California (Metcalf 1971). And even in the case of what seem to be clear-cut distinctions--for example /t/ instead of /θ/ in words like "thing" and "three"--it is frequency of occurrence rather than invariable use or non-use that differentiates speakers from different social classes, as Labov (1964) has shown.

The conclusion seems inescapable that the standard vs. non-standard dichotomy is a convenient but crude fiction. What it represents is in reality a kind of status continuum, on the order of Joos' (1967:11) "responsibility" scale, with the highest status in the middle and the upper end representing a sort of hyper-standard to which educated speakers pay lip service but which they regard in practice as affected or "prissy" (Joos 1967:18; McDavid 1969b:48-49). This status scale is, in turn, interconnected with a number of other scales (McDavid 1968a; 1969b) whose relative importance varies with the situation. In fact, as Joos points out (1967:12-13), the significance of the "responsibility" scale itself is short-lived, it is important to know which people belong in which groups only when "social clusters" are being formed, after which usage is largely ignored and other factors determine linguistic appropriateness. Thus the businessmen surveyed by Camer (1968) were concerned not with "correct usage" so much as with "organization of ideas, brevity of statement, clarity of vocabulary and sentence structure, and tact and alertness in all language activities," criteria which probably influence most people most of the time regardless of what they say they look for in evaluating linguistic performance.

4. Linguistic Complexity and Creativity

In short, as Creswell says (1964:69), "the facts of dialect difference are infinitely too complex to be susceptible of presentation in a simple linear scale..." And in view of this complexity, any kind of instruction aimed narrowly at teaching standard forms seems bound to fail even if it succeeds. At best, it may open the door to social and economic advancement for speakers of non-standard English only to leave them stranded on the threshold with little idea of how to talk once they get inside. At worst, it will burden them with the same kind of linguistic insecurity and self-consciousness that already afflicts many lower middle-class white Americans. What students need to unlock a wider range of social and economic opportunities is nothing less than what Kochman (1969:87) terms "performance capability in a variety of social contexts on a variety of subject matter" (Cf. Cazden 1970 and Cromack 1971).

Since the schools have fallen short of attaining much less ambitious goals in English instruction, it may appear that calling for the development of language skills on so broad a scale amounts to asking for the impossible. Perhaps it would be, if it were true (as educators so often assume) that students learn only what they are specifically taught. However, it is a cardinal principle of current psycholinguistic theory that "language is...a kind of latent structure in the human mind, developed and fixed by exposure to specific linguistic experience," and consequently that a speaker's competence--that is, his knowledge of its underlying forms--

extends vastly beyond his experience" (Chomsky 1968:50, 66). It is this principle which explains the generative or creative aspect of human language noted earlier (p. 2), which G/T linguists recognize as its most important and unique property. Indeed, in the absence of such a principle it would be impossible to learn a language at all; as Newmark says (1966:221-22), "if each /linguistic/ item had to be acquired one at a time, proceeding from simplest to most complex...the child learner would be old before he could say a single appropriate thing and the adult learner would be dead."

Once language learning is seen in the light of this principle, the function of instruction may be radically redefined. Instead of presenting the details of language in an "additive and linear" way (Newmark 1966:221), the job is to program the student's language experience in such a way that his competence is enhanced and is translated more fully into performance (Cf. Rosenbaum 1969:114). Exactly how to accomplish this remains unclear, but certain general guidelines seem obvious. First, language learning should take place in what Chomsky calls "a rich linguistic environment for the intuitive heuristics that the normal human automatically possesses" (MacIntyre 1968:108). Second, language learning tasks should be creative, involving the generation of new utterances rather than the analysis of existing ones; as Rosenbaum (1969:114) points out, "creative tasks are important because of their close relation to the desired behavioral objectives of language learning, namely, the ability to produce and fully comprehend well-formed utterances in all modes."

In meeting these conditions, the ideal setting is not the classroom but the real world, where the vast majority of language learning has always taken place. It is well known that the best way to learn a foreign language is to go where everyone uses it so that you can observe what they do, absorb the underlying patterns (mostly intuitively), and develop your competence by using the language yourself. Similarly, the best way to learn variant forms of your native language is to experience them, and if possible gain practice in manipulating them, in the social situations where they naturally occur. That is why students who are well motivated and who are exposed to a wide range of English outside of school have no trouble learning to use the language effectively, quite apart from (and sometimes in spite of) what goes on in their English classes. As Newmark and Reibel put it (1968:236), "unless a learner has learned instances of language in use, he has not learned them as language, and...if he has learned enough such instances, he will not need to have analysis and generalization about those wholes made for him."

5. Simulation as a Language Teaching Tool

Many students, however, lack adequate opportunities for such "real-time" experience in the linguistic matrix of the majority culture. For them, the next best thing is a classroom which functions as a simulator of suitably rich and varied linguistic environments. To quote Newmark again (1966:225),

> Since the actual classroom is only one small piece of the world in which we expect the learner to use the language, artificial means must be used to transform it into a variety of other pieces: the obvious means for performing this transformation is drama--imaginative play has always been a powerful educational device both for children and adults. By creating a dramatic situation in a classroom...the teacher can expand the classroom indefinitely and provide imaginatively natural contexts for the language being used.

Such a classroom would necessarily be conducted in a highly unconventional way. However, as Rosenbaum says (1969:117),

> No truly important improvement in language instruction, remedial or otherwise, can be realized without an alteration in the logistics of classroom learning, for current classroom practices do not mesh with the environmental requirements for effective language instruction.

The foregoing conclusions are not exactly novel, of course. The value of simulation as an educational strategy has been widely recognized, and its applications to language instruction at all educational levels have received considerable attention. In fact, drama has become a central activity in the English informal schools, whose success has heavily influenced American education in the past few years, and its wider use was enthusiastically endorsed by both English and American participants at the 1966 Dartmouth Seminar on the Teaching of English (Barnes 1968; Dixon 1967:34ff.; Muller 1967:129ff.). Dramatic techniques are also prominent in Moffett's ambitious proposals for an integrated language arts curriculum (1968a, 1968b), whose development was stimulated by the Dartmouth conference.

Applications of simulation to language teaching have seldom been based on a clear understanding of its relationship to linguistic principles or learning theory, however. Some experimenters with classroom dramatics have invoked Piaget's theories (e.g., Sonquist and Kamii 1967), and others make passing reference to linguistic and rhetorical principles (e.g., Moffett 1968a, 1968b). But the writers know of only one instance where simulation has been treated explicitly as an application of recent work in psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics and that is the unpublished report by Waterhouse (1969) on a college level program for Mexican-American students. Of course, there is nothing wrong with adopting this approach to language instruction for pragmatic or intuitive reasons, so long as it works. Still, it seems likely to be more effective if its relation to the language learning process and to the realities of sociolinguistics is more clearly understood.

6. Classroom Dramatics For Mexican-American Students

If the improvement of language skills is best approached on a broad scale rather than a narrow one, and if classroom dramatics is a uniquely

appropriate way of accomplishing this, there are several reasons why such an approach is especially desirable with Mexican-American students. One is simply the urgency of finding solutions to their language learning problems. Poverty, educational and occupational disadvantage, alienation, and growing militancy in the Mexican-American community constitute a major social crisis in our society which must receive high priority as a matter of social justice and ultimately, perhaps, of national survival. Effective language instruction can remove one of the major causes for this crisis.

Another reason is that the difference between linguistic competence and actual performance is typically much greater for Mexican-Americans than for Anglo students (Waterhouse 1969). In fact, taking account of Troike's (1969) distinction between receptive competence and productive competence widens the gap into a yawning chasm, since most English-speaking Mexican-American students clearly understand, and therefore have receptive competence in, many modes of the language that they cannot reproduce (including, of course, the standard English used by English teachers, astronauts, TV announcers, and the like). Classroom dramatics offers a singularly versatile way to bridge this gap by providing, in Loban's words (cited in Dixon 1967), "non-threatening, self-enhancing interaction with other people," "the opportunity to verbalize...experience," and "encouragement and opportunity for self-expression."

Loban's remarks suggest another advantage of classroom dramatics as a vehicle for language learning, and that is its potential for overcoming cultural interference. Probably the least understood and most often ignored reason for the failure of the schools to educate minority students has been well described by Labov (1964:94):

> How is it that young people who are exposed to the Standard English of their teachers for twelve years cannot reproduce this style for twelve minutes in a job interview? ... Those who feel that they can solve this problem by experimenting with the machinery of the learning process are measuring small causes against large effects. My own feeling is that the primary interference...stems from a conflict of value systems.

Drama and role-playing are certainly not sure-fire ways to overcome this conflict--as Labov indicates, no instructional technique is--but at least they enable minority students to project their own feelings, values, and mores in the classroom, something that is impossible in traditional teacher-centered, content-oriented settings; on this point, see Halpern 1971.

Mexican-Americans especially need such opportunities, as is illustrated by the fact (often noted by teachers) that Mexican-American boys often become "turned off" and hostile in the upper elementary grades while girls, sometimes from the same families, remain cooperative and interested in

school tasks. Even a rudimentary knowledge of Mexican-American culture, with its sharp separation of male and female roles and its emphasis on the concept of machismo (Brussell 1968:25ff.), goes a long way toward explaining this phenomenon. Preventing it is likely to prove difficult at best, particularly for teachers who are Anglo, middle-aged, and female, but giving Mexican-American boys a chance to act out male roles in terms of their own culture is bound to help. Looking at Mexican-American culture in a more positive way also supports the case for classroom dramatics. According to the research on cultural characteristics summarized by Brussell (1968:35), "dramatism is an outstanding value orientation...; Mexican-American social relationships are highly formalized and...and life itself is seen as dramatic and ceremonial." Furthermore, there is a preference for "the kind of activity which is a spontaneous expression of...the human personality" and an acting out of "impulses and desires." The writers' preliminary experience in using classroom dramatics with Mexican-American students suggests that this is indeed the case, and that even those who are usually unmotivated in school often take part enthusiastically.

With all these reasons to recommend it, the use of dramatic techniques to improve the language skills of Mexican-American students seems well worth trying in a sustained and systematic way.

APPENDIX B
SAMPLE OF EVALUATION FORMS

EVALUATION FORM

USOE Regional Research Project 2.I-022
Contract # OEC-9-72-0028(057)

Using Creative Dramatics To Improve the English Language Skills of Mexican-American Students.

Dr. Richard H. Hendrickson, Project Director

Please begin by providing the following information about yourself:

SEX_____ AGE_____ OCCUPATION_____

EDUCATION (Highest Degree Completed and Major Field)_____

BIRTHPLACE_____ PLEASE LIST ALL PLACES (INCLUDING CURRENT PLACE OF RESIDENT) WHERE YOU HAVE LIVED FOR ONE YEAR OR MORE_____

_____

IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN, WHAT ARE THEIR AGES? _____

On the following pages, you are asked to evaluate the oral effectiveness of some school students in brief, videotaped interviews with an adult. Some of these students are in the primary grades and others are in junior high school. Most of them will appear more than once in the tapes. Please respond to each performance by each student by placing "X" marks at appropriate points on a series of rating scales, as shown in the examples below. The first of these scales measures over-all oral effectiveness:

COMMUNICATES EFFECTIVELY — COMMUNICATES INEFFECTIVELY

The other scales measure particular aspects of oral performance or overt behavior. For example:

USES APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE — USES INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE

SEEMS RELAXED — SEEMS NERVOUS

This survey is intended to elicit impressionistic rather than reasoned responses. Therefore, please indicate how you feel about each aspect of each student's performance <u>without</u> attempting to analyze or explain the reasons for for your feelings. The results of this survey will be used only in evaluating the research project, and individual responses will not be made known to the students, their parents, or their teachers, nor will your name be used in connection with the results. We are grateful for your cooperation.

EVALUATION FORM

STUDENT'S NAME_____ SAMPLE #( )

COMMUNICATES WELL	COMMUNICATES POORLY
TALKS FREELY	SAYS LITTLE
CONVEYS IDEAS CLEARLY	CONVEYS IDEAS UNCLEARLY
USES APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE	USES INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE
HAS NO ACCENT	HAS NOTICEABLE ACCENT
SEEMS RELAXED	SEEMS NERVOUS
SEEMS AGGRESSIVE	SEEMS PASSIVE
SEEMS FRIENDLY	SEEMS HOSTILE
RELATES WELL TO OTHER STUDENTS	RELATES POORLY TO OTHER STUDENTS
RELATES WELL TO INTERVIEWER	RELATES POORLY TO INTERVIEWER

STUDENT'S NAME_____ SAMPLE #( )

COMMUNICATES WELL	COMMUNICATES POORLY
TALKS FREELY	SAYS LITTLE
CONVEYS IDEAS CLEARLY	CONVEYS IDEAS UNCLEARLY
USES APPROPRIATE LANGAUGE	USES INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE
HAS NO ACCENT	HAS NOTICEABLE ACCENT
SEEMS RELAXED	SEEMS NERVOUS
SEEMS AGGRESSIVE	SEEMS PASSIVE
SEEMS FRIENDLY	SEEMS HOSTILE
RELATES WELL TO OTHER STUDENTS	RELATES POORLY TO OTHER STUDENTS
RELATES WELL TO INTERVIEWER	RELATES POORLY TO INTERVIEWER

Evaluation forms on page 50-83 omitted as photographically not reproducible

APPENDIX C

EVALUATIONS OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

On the following pages, scores assigned by the panel of evaluators to student performances on the evaluation tapes are compiled. Scores are given only for those students who were recorded on both the initial and final evaluation tapes. A seperate page is used for initial and final evaluations of each student. Individual students are identified by number and their grade levels and groups (experimental or control) are indicated.

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